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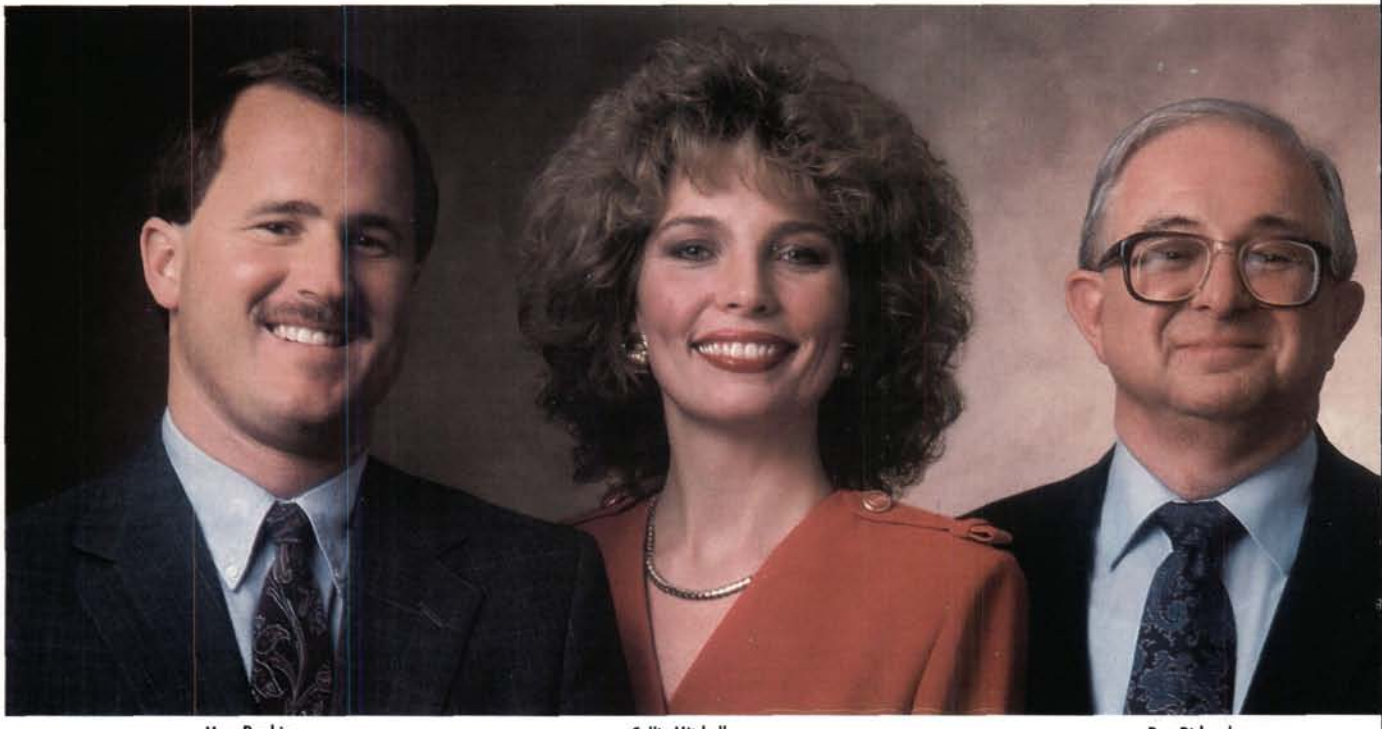

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FROM WASHINGTON

Smokenders

A few weeks ago in this space, urging a bit of sympathy for the displaced apparatchiks of Eastern Europe, I mused about the way a revolution in moral perceptions can sort of sneak up on you. George Bush, for example, though not a racist or an evil person, opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Looking back on that, and on his years of happily raising a family in a state with officially segregated schools, Bush (like millions of other Americans) must be astonished that he couldn't see then what he presumably sees so clearly now. Smug today in our moral self-confidence about the righteousness of our own society, we should always be steeled for the next thunderclap. That was my point. But I didn't hazard a guess where the thunderclap would come from.

Now I've got a guess. Since at least 1964, when the Surgeon General's report officially linked cigarettes to cancer, smoking has been generally disapproved of. Cigarette ads on television were banned a few years later, there's been a steady drumbeat of public education, and the smoking habit has drifted down from 40 percent to 29 percent of the adult population.

But within the past couple of years, and even more within the past few months, the general trend of anti-smoking efforts has accelerated. Smoking has been banned from virtually all airline flights. (Doesn't it already seem remarkable that even short flights allowed smoking just two years ago?) In 1987 only fourteen states restricted smoking in restaurants; in 1988 twenty-three states did; now it's thirty. The secretary of health, Louis Sullivan, browbeat R. J. Reynolds into withdrawing a new brand aimed at blacks. California has launched a $221 million anti-smoking drive, funded by a twenty-five-cent tax increase on each cigarette pack. Local governments are starting to go after vending machines, which make a mockery of the states' attempts to outlaw cigarette sales to minors.

Soon, I suspect, we will look back on the past twenty-six years with puzzlement, at the least. How could we have acknowledged the harm smoking does, and lived so comfortably with that knowledge? Tobacco will not be outlawed, nor should it be. Practical problems aside, informed adults have the right to behave foolishly. What will seem incredible, I think, is the relative absence of stigma associated with the production and peddling of tobacco products. Tobacco companies are still regarded as relatively normal members of the business establishment. People work for them, invest in them, sell to them, buy from them without giving it too much thought.

Just eighteen months ago, for example, the attention of the business world, and much of the country, was riveted on the leveraged buyout of RJR Nabisco. Almost every aspect and implication of this deal was exhaustively chewed over. It is now the subject of a best-selling book, *Barbarians at the Gates* (Harper & Row). The lead characters in the drama—Ross Johnson, the company's president; Henry Kravis, the takeover mogul—have been widely vilified for greed, decadence, ruthlessness, indifference to stockholders, indifference to employees, indifference to the national interest. One thing they have not been widely vilified for is producing cigarettes. In all the discussion, the fact that they were battling for control of a firm whose major product kills 350,000 Americans a year has hardly been mentioned. Eighteen months from now, I predict, that will seem quite strange.

Why so abruptly and why now? After all, the basic fact that smoking can kill you has been well known since even before the Surgeon General's report. Evidence about the alleged dangers of "passive smoking" (inhaling others' smoke) is more recent but less persuasive. It can't explain the recent anti-smoking boomlet, though it is often used to justify recent anti-smoking measures.

The explanation may be that at some point in a perceptual revolution the anomalies suddenly reach a critical mass. It takes a while for reality to sink in, but there comes a moment when the gap between widely accepted principles and established ways of living seems too great. That's what happened with civil rights in the 1960s. The principle of black equality wasn't new, but the anomalies suddenly were too much to bear. This is not to equate the issue of smoking with the issue of civil rights. But the dynamic is similar.

Why does it happen suddenly? Maybe because each measure taken to reflect the new understanding only increases

continued on page 53

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Cover by Taylor Jones for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Left to right: Cranston, Mitchell, Gephardt, Foley, D'Amato, Gingrich, Helms, with Dole as the bat.

4 MICHAEL KINSLEY **TRB: SMOKENDERS** No more ifs or ands about butts.

6 CORRESPONDENCE Starving artists, Brustein on Baranczak, &c.

7 THE EDITORS **VILLAINS OF VILNIUS** Whatever Gorbachev's real intentions, the Soviets have no justification for clamping down on Lithuania. Why aren't we leaning on them? **CAPTIVE MARKET** Beirut's kidnappers get top dollar when they sell their merchandise to the West. **NOTEBOOK** Jewish jingos, &c.

9 CULLEN MURPHY **MY EVENING WITH ANDREI** Gromyko: what a guy. In his new book, he describes his long, catatonic walk through the twentieth century.

12 ANNIE KRIEGEL **SURVIVAL MODE** One by one, Gorbachev's plans have come up empty.

13 NICHOLAS GOLDBERG **GOD'S CHOSEN** How poor blacks got pushed out of their Long Island homes to make room for Alfonse D'Amato's friends and relations.

18 FRED BARNES **LEADERS TO FOLLOW** For the good of their party, House Speaker Foley and Senate Majority Leader Mitchell need to stop being such nice guys.

22 HENDRIK HERTZBERG **TWELVE IS ENOUGH** Congress has a bad case of chronic incumbency. Voting against your congressman won't cure it. Term limits will.

27 MARK GREEN **TAKE THE MONEY AND REFORM** The signs are propitious for a campaign reform bill this year. Here's the morning line on the options.

30 STANLEY KAUFFMANN **ON FILMS: BOUND FOR LOVE** Pedro Almodóvar's *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!*: it's love (and lots of sex) between a mental patient and a porn star.

31 JAGDISH BHAGWATI **BEHIND THE GREEN CARD** *The Economic Consequences of Immigration* by Julian L. Simon; *Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigrants on the U.S. Economy* by George J. Borjas

36 SYBIL ESTESS **POEM** *Pretending You Were Joseph*

40 DENIS DONOGHUE **THE VISIBLE AND THE INVISIBLE** *In the Western Night: Collected Poems, 1965-90* by Frank Bidart

45 ROBERT TUCKER **THE LAST STALINIST** *Memoirs* by Andrei Gromyko, translated by Harold Shukman

50 MARY JO SALTER **IN PRAISE OF ACCIDENTS** *Friend of My Youth* by Alice Munro

54 MARTIN PERETZ **JERUSALEM DIARIST: VISIONARIES & FANTASISTS** An Israeli Passover, with new arrivals from Moscow and Berlin.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Artful dodge

To the editors:

Regarding your editorial "Indecent Request" (April 9): the issue is not censorship, which exists and will continue to exist unless the National Endowment of the Arts funds every application presented to them—not a practical idea. In the visual arts, the national public arts policy has been to fund overwhelmingly the continuing iconoclasm of the avant-garde; the national art style promoted has been overwhelmingly modernist.

Modernist work is grounded fundamentally in solipsism: its creation is guided by the precept that only knowledge of the self is possible since only the self exists, and therefore reality is wholly subjective. Artistic creation is thus a matter of self-exploration, and novelty is the measure of artistic merit. The problem, of course, is that most ordinary folks do not embrace the exceptionally narrow tenets of modernism. For most, the merits of objects that claim to be art can be ranked according to their technical quality and content—according to objective criteria. In short, beauty is knowable, and it may be studied in the context of whether it is good or bad, true or not; art has meaning. This view, which guided developments within the "art establishment" for many centuries prior to our own, is termed irrelevant or archaic by today's modernist establishment.

Members of this establishment have repeated ad nauseam that only the initiated can understand and therefore assess the merits of particular objects. Nonsense. This lie is just turf protection. What kind of national arts policy we want and what art style or styles merit national recognition can be debated in easily understood terms. The real issue is not censorship, but a lack of this type of debate.

ELIZABETH B. LURIE
Maggie Valley, North Carolina

To the editors:

My thoroughly liberal mind reels over why there is such a flap over artistic restrictions on government-funded art. Whether the taste of Jesse Helms and the NEA runs to capitalist realism or velvet paintings of Elvis, well, to each his own. Patrons have always controlled to one extent or another the content of art they commissioned. Artists are free to pursue their vision wherever it takes them—on their own time, though, or at the expense of a willing sponsor or marketplace.

Serious First, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendment questions would exist if the government said it wouldn't buy any art from, say, minorities, gays, or anarcho-syndicalists. But all the NEA is saying is that it wouldn't now buy "Piss Christ" if Norman Rockwell had rendered it. The "slippery slope" TNR fears exists only in the minds of artists hooked on government money. The worst aspect of the uncharacteristically faulty thinking TNR used is in its comparison of the NEA restrictions to a loyalty oath for government employees. Sure, the government can't require a park ranger to sign an oath avowing he is not a commie/gay/you-name-it, but it should not be required to hire him for the express purpose of promoting or agitating ideas, even protected First Amendment ideas, that the government finds anathema. It is bewildering that these artists think this is wrong.

The free market clamors for a robust, Jeffersonian exchange of ideas unfettered by the sinister Senator Helms. Give the devil his due; he's right this time.

GARRETT W. SIMPSON
Phoenix, Arizona

Baltic sellout

To the editors:

I am appalled at the error that the news media in general and TNR in particular (most recently in your editorial "Chicken Vilnius," April 16) keep repeating in regard to Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis's comment about the possibility of being sold out by the West again. Landsbergis refers not only to the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, but also to the Yalta conference of February 1945, where Roosevelt and Churchill sold out Eastern Europe and the Baltic states to Stalin. It continues to amaze me that in this era of relative historical honesty in the Soviet Union our own news media perpetuates ignorance about the events at the end of World War II. Just because Roosevelt and Churchill won the war (and were otherwise good leaders) is no reason to ignore their sellout of the Baltic.

ELLEN A. GREEVER
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Excremental vision

To the editors:

I wish to dissent from Stanislaw Baranczak's attack on the German dramatic poet Heiner Müller ("Voltaire's Vomit," April 23). Baranczak claims he doesn't wish to join Jesse Helms's vice squad "by making such a fuss about Müller's scatology," but that is precisely what he is doing. Müller's focus on the physical functions is no more obsessive than that of Buechner, Wedekind, Strindberg, Von Sternheim, Brecht, or any other Germanic or Nordic writer. The "excremental vision," inspired by our being born *inter faeces et urinas*, is shared by many writers, even informing the works of such beloved English-speaking authors as Jonson, Swift, Joyce, and Beckett.

As for Baranczak's efforts to stuff Müller's feverish aesthetic into an East German Communist sausage, this kind of reductive ideological criticism is more appropriate to *Commentary* or *The New Criterion* than TNR. It is true that Müller remains a Marxist, as Brecht did. It is also true (again like Brecht) that most of his works are highly complicated engines of imagery, marrying historical allusions with an idiosyncratic view of existence—which explains his influence on the totally apolitical image-maker Robert Wilson. Surely Müller's remark, contemptuously quoted by Baranczak, that German unification is "deadly boring" and will "deprive Europe of color" is more the observation of an artist than of an ideologue. It is Baranczak who comes off as the ideologue.

ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Photo opportunities

To the editors:

In his New York Diarist ("Corporate Populist," April 2), James Atlas assaulted my essay in *Critical Inquiry* (Winter 1990) on "Corporate Populism," where I proposed that *The New York Times Magazine*'s manipulation of the photos for Atlas's essay "The Battle of the Books" (June 5, 1988) was more interesting than Atlas's text. It is not surprising that Atlas disagrees. What is both surprising and amusing is the spectacle of Atlas parading his wounded vanity as a symptom of general cultural decline.

I agree that, for better or worse, the man of letters is obsolete. For Atlas this loss is a sad fact of nature; he is blind to its connections with the corporate interests he serves in furthering his own career. He claims not to understand what I mean by "corporate populism." Let me be plain. Corporate populism is at work whenever a giant media monolith like the New York Times Company speaks through someone like James Atlas, whose little learning and loud cries of offended common sense help keep unacceptable ideas at bay.

JEROME CHRISTENSEN
Baltimore, Maryland

To the editors:

Tell Professor Jerome Christensen that decisions about magazine photo layouts are based not on questions of depth psychology but on deadline-driven (usually

continued on page 53

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

MAY 14, 1990

VILLAINS OF VILNIUS

Mikhail Gorbachev is strangling Lithuania economically, demanding its surrender to his imperial will. He is refusing to negotiate with its democratically installed leadership and has used force to seize control of public buildings. And President Bush, in retaliation for these violations of the principles of self-determination and non-use of force, has decided to . . . do nothing. Actually, Bush has decided to do less than nothing: to consider imposing economic sanctions, to tell the world that he was about to impose them, and then abruptly to withdraw the threat.

The why of this may be more shameful than the inaction itself: not a single foreign ally among some twenty consulted would back U.S. economic sanctions. In a White House meeting, the leaders of Congress exerted almost no pressure on Bush. Crackpot Senator Jesse Helms suggested sending an ambassador to Vilnius, thereby stamping diplomatic recognition of Lithuania as an extremist idea, which it is not. Democratic Representative Dante Fascell suggested that Bush might consider canceling the May 30 summit with Gorbachev, but didn't urge it. And in a *Wall Street Journal*-NBC poll, 64 percent of the American people said that the United States "should not get involved" in the Lithuanian dispute. Bush had indicated previously that he didn't want to give Gorbachev a hard time over Lithuania; the polls and his poll of the pols confirmed his passive instinct. What a message this sends to Gorbachev: "Do what you will to deprive the Baltic states of their freedom, just do not disturb us with any bloodshed."

Bush does not know why Gorbachev is balking at granting independence to the Baltics, and otherwise retrenching on his plans for perestroika and glasnost. Neither do we. One possibility is that all the optimists in the West have been fooled by Gorbachev—that he's no democrat after all, no new political thinker or radical reformer, but a czar determined to modernize the Russian empire economically, keep it intact, and rule it from the center. (See "Survival Mode" by Annie Kriegel, page 12.) Though nominally an advocate of decentralized authority, Gorbachev has amassed enormous power in his new presidency, ostensibly to advance perestroika. He has now used the power twice: first, to try to suffocate Lithuania, and, on April 20, to strip the radical-reformist Moscow City Council of its power to permit political demonstrations in the capital. These cases suggest that whenever democratic elections produce local officials whose policies Gorbachev does not like, he will simply usurp their powers.

A second possibility, widely accepted in the West, is that Gorbachev is under extreme pressure from reactionary elements in his country—notably in the military—to keep things from falling apart. Economic crises and the accelerating secessionist upheavals, goes the theory, make it necessary for him to retrench, but it's only temporary. Gorbachev can't allow freedom for the Baltics now, but eventually he will. He also can't go through with promised free market economic reforms because they might lead to disorder, but he will. And as soon as he's got things under control, he will resume progress in the START and conventional arms talks, ending the sudden Soviet foot-dragging that blocks those agreements from being signed at the summit.

A third possibility is that Gorbachev is a work in progress, making himself up as he goes along. By this theory, he set out to repair the Soviet system by whatever method would work. First, he tried exhortation

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and anti-drinking campaigns. When that failed, he decided to go radical—to hive off untenable portions of the empire, disclose part of the awful truth about Chernobyl (the rest of the truth is that 2.5 million people still live in contaminated areas, and food is still grown there), discredit past leaders and the Communist Party apparatus, and make dramatic concessions to the West. Now he is throttling back on glasnost and perestroika to save his skin. To keep the game going, he may have to kill some people in the Baltics, as he did in Georgia and Azerbaijan, though for the sake of good relations with the West and economic credits, he'd rather not.

Whichever of these theories is correct, it does not serve the West (or the cause of democratic reform in the Soviet Union) for us to stand by and accept retrograde behavior. There needs to be countervailing pressure from the West to make clear what the costs will be: a stoppage of hoped-for assistance in making the Soviet Union a modern country. And, as Bush's soundings abroad and the polls at home amply demonstrate, there needs to be leadership from the president of the United States.

Like what? Like organization of a diplomatic offensive by the NATO allies and Japan, public and private, to insist upon good faith negotiations by the Soviet Union toward Baltic independence, not toward acceptance of the legal labyrinth that Gorbachev has invented for secession. Like suggesting an intermediary between Moscow and Vilnius, such as Pope John Paul II. Like an agreement among the allies to do whatever can be done—short of military action—to see that Lithuania is not starved into submission. The United States can provide credits to allow the Lithuanians to purchase fuel and food. If Gorbachev uses a naval blockade to bar such shipments from reaching port, we cannot stop him, any more than we can stop him from shooting people in the streets. But we have pressured him into avoiding the use of lethal force in Lithuania so far, and we ought to try to pressure him to stop starving the Lithuanians into submission.

Bush evidently fears that any U.S. action except quiet diplomacy might provoke Gorbachev into refusing to pull Soviet troops out of Eastern Europe or into trying to block German reunification. These would be temporary blows to Western interests, but ultimately the Soviets could not hold on to Eastern Europe and would further impoverish themselves trying. This would also be grounds for canceling the summit and otherwise stopping progress toward détente. Eastern European nations are among those asking us not to make a fuss over Lithuania. But suppose, for other reasons, Gorbachev decided to renege on promises to withdraw troops from Eastern Europe. They would want us to protest, and we should. So should we for Lithuania.

We are not urging provocation. We are urging pressure on the Soviet system to do the right thing. From the beginning of Gorbachev's reign, Western insistence and examples have been instrumental in shaping Soviet policy on arms control, Third World conflicts, human rights, and economic theory. In just one area, Eastern Europe, Gorbachev moved further and faster than the West dreamed possible, largely because the peoples of Eastern Europe themselves aspired to be part of the West. It's possible—likely, in fact—that the Soviet system is incapable of being democratized and modernized. It's likely that party, military, bureaucratic, and nationalist vested interests simply will not yield enough power to permit the peaceful creation of a modern liberal democracy. Mikhail Gorbachev may be reaching the limits of his own powers to produce change. Even so, the United States should be pushing for what it wants, and that includes freedom for peoples even Gorbachev admits were absorbed illegitimately into the Soviet Union.

CAPTIVE MARKET

Twenty Westerners, including seven Americans, are still held hostage by the various Lebanese subsidiaries of the Iranian state. No wonder the Bush administration has been full of abject gratitude toward the Syrian government: the regime of Hafez Assad is all there is right now to facilitate contacts between the captors in Beirut and Tehran and the countries of the captives. The kidnapped men may well have been foolish to remain in Lebanon long after it had come to approximate Hobbes's state of nature. But democratic societies somehow are unable to turn away from the fate of their own. The kidnappers and their Syrian and Iranian mentors know this, and play it for all it's worth.

The White House will continue to insist sanctimoniously that it has forsworn deals with these adepts of terror. No one is deceived. The undeserved compliments heaped on President Assad are the equivalent of billions in the currency of international diplomacy. Judged by how he has performed at home, he is mostly a butcher. Judged by the roles in which Washington has now cast him, he is both savior and statesman.

Beyond this there will soon be the tangibles. Paris traded jet fighters for its imprisoned citizens. Washington will probably deal in credits and trade. These folk expect to be rewarded for their crimes. British newspapers have reported that the Israelis will satisfy some of their demands. This would not be the first time that Israel has loyally provided the United States with hundreds of Shiite (or other Arab) prisoners to complete a transaction for one or at most a handful of American victims. It is a very cruel commerce.

When the Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine announced that it was preparing to release one of three hostages taken thirty-nine months ago from the American University of Beirut, it simultaneously

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tempted and taunted the hostage families. First it released photographs of Jesse Turner, and the television networks descended on Boise, Idaho, his hometown. (His mother was in a TV studio ready to welcome him before an audience of millions.) Then the captors put out photos of Alann Steen, and the hearts of those close to him beat faster. This, too, was a ruse. The lucky and wholly innocent victim of more than three years without sun and without hope was Robert Polhill. But then all of the hostages are without sin. That, of course, means nothing to the criminal fanatics of the Middle East. Liberation movements, indeed.

NOTEBOOK

THE SWELLINGS OF DAVID: The body of the late national unity government in Israel was still warm when Yitzhak Shamir's caretaker government revealed his, and his party's, true and ugly colors. A few days before Easter, a few yards from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, 150 religious Jewish jingoists, mysteriously escorted by a heavy police guard, occupied a house in the Christian quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem, called it the Dwellings of David, and declared that another small step toward a Greater Israel had been taken. Jews had lived in the house in the 1920s, they said—as if Jews must always live wherever Jews have lived. This provocation understandably incensed the Christians of Jerusalem, and their massed protest ended with Christian clerics tear-gassed by Israeli soldiers protecting the Israeli squatters. Palestinian militants made of this what they could, which was plenty. As usual, it fell to the Israeli courts to correct the excesses of the settler movement: a panel of three judges immediately ordered the eviction of the provocateurs and imposed a stiff fine. The settlers claimed that they were the guests of a corporation registered in Panama that had leased the house from an Armenian resident. Then it was revealed that Shamir's caretaker government—the same government that insists it wants a political settlement of the Palestinian problem, that protests its friendship with the United States is essential, that pleads poverty in its attempt to house tens of thousands of new immigrants from the Soviet Union—had provided $1.6 million, or 40 percent of the money, for the purchase of that lease. Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem, whose remarkable achievements in uniting the city have been threatened again and again by the Likud's obnoxious adventurism, denounced the government and accused it of a cover-up. This aggression in the Christian quarter broke new ground in cynicism even for the Likud. If there were any doubts that the Likud is the enemy of civil peace, ethnic tolerance, political compromise, and ordinary decency, they have been put to rest. Meanwhile the churches have shut down in protest, adding to the inflammation—but then overreaction by the other side, and the promotion of tension, is always part of a provocateur's plan. The matter is now back in the courts. However it rules, one verdict is clear: Shamir and his associates are men who would blithely risk the position of their country to satisfy their rapacious nationalist appetites.

THE MISSION THING:
"This mission is completed." —George Bush, upon the release of Robert Polhill, as quoted by Youssef Ibrahim in *The New York Times*, April 23, page A1

"This is mission uncompleted." —George Bush, upon the release of Robert Polhill, as quoted by Thomas Friedman in *The New York Times*, same day, page A8

SORRY, MR. CARTER: Due to a wetware malfunction, our plug for *Reconstruction*, the new quarterly magazine of black politics, society, and culture edited by Randall Kennedy, misidentified the author of the first issue's "searching and critical" article on affirmative action (Notebook, April 30). The real author is Stephen L. Carter, a professor of law at Yale. William H. Simon has an article in the same issue, but it's about industrial relations. •

The mask behind the man.

MY EVENING WITH ANDREI

By Cullen Murphy

A friend, knowing my tastes, presented me one day recently with the newly published *Memoirs* of Andrei Gromyko, the longtime Soviet foreign minister. That very night I repaired with the book to my room. Several hours later, as an icy Siberian wind rattled the windowpanes, or so it seemed, I turned the final page.

Andrei Andreevich Gromyko, who died last summer at the age of eighty, was an object of considerable fascination during his fifty years at the Soviet Foreign Ministry. Gromyko was that great rarity, a public figure who, like Buster Keaton, Calvin Coolidge, and the Easter Island statues, managed to pass an entire career with no visible change of expression. The memoirs contain several badly retouched photographs, examples of an art form that has flourished under Russian socialism, but the airbrush seems never to have been used to turn up the corners of Gromyko's mouth. One picture,

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which shows Andrei's mother, brothers, and sister, suggests strongly that Gromyko's characteristic attitude of implacable melancholy had a genetic basis.

In an introduction to the book Henry Kissinger states that Gromyko possessed a sense of humor, albeit an "understated" one, and I entertained a pang of worry that Gromyko, whose dour constancy has always been a kind of reference point for me, would turn out in his memoirs to be the Noël Coward of the steppes. After encountering this sentence in the first few pages—"Dialectical materialism had already taken root in the minds of us youngsters"—my fears vanished.

No, Gromyko keeps any zaniness pretty well in check—a tendency, by the way, that he admires in others. "He seemed to lack any emotion," Gromyko writes approvingly of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, "though of course this was because he had remarkable self-control." Of the Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, Gromyko writes, "At the beginning of a meeting he adopts a physical posture which remains fixed throughout, while his face is utterly inscrutable." He adds quickly, "I point this out not because I disapprove."

FAMILY PORTRAIT

In less capable hands a memoir in which the author discusses his meetings with three or four hundred of the twentieth century's most prominent writers, artists, actors, monarchs, and statesmen might have produced a memorable anecdote or two. Gromyko avoids that trap. To be sure, part of the reason is that many of the people Gromyko talks to—U Thant, Pope Paul VI, Kurt Waldheim, Yasir Arafat—share his understated sense of humor. But most of the credit belongs to Gromyko himself, and his sustained commitment to a form of literary experiment one might call *chitchatprop.* He can greet a Picasso, a Chaplin, a Pasternak, and, to judge from his own accounts, in no time at all steer the subject of discussion away from culture or gossip and toward peaceful coexistence and the liquidation of weapons of mass destruction. This approach was perhaps not possible with Marilyn Monroe, however. Gromyko's encounter with her went like this:

> I was passing her table when she suddenly turned to me: "Mr. Gromyko, how are you?" Although we'd never met before, she spoke as if we were old friends. Mostly out of courtesy, I replied: "Hello, I'm just fine. And how about you? I've seen a lot of your films." She held out her hand and said something, but I missed the words. . . .
>
> End of conversation.

Of course, Gromyko's true vocation was not small talk but diplomacy. He held endless rounds of discussions with world leaders, and those of the discussions that he reconstructs take up about half the book. Had you perhaps allowed Ayub Khan to slip from memory? Krishna Menon? Hugh Gaitskill? Archbishop Makarios? Here is the place to renew your acquaintance. The reconstruction that follows, in which Gromyko is speaking with Pope John Paul II and the Vatican's secretary of state, Agostino Cardinal Casaroli, gives some idea of the persuasive power that kept Gromyko in office during five Soviet regimes:

> The pope moved on to the issue of religious belief. "It is possible that the obstacles to freedom of religion have not been removed everywhere." He paused. "According to some sources, something of this sort may be happening in the U.S.S.R." This kind of accusation was nothing new for us. I replied, "Not all rumors deserve attention. The West spreads all kinds of misinformation about the Soviet Union, but the truth is that from the first day of its existence the Soviet state has guaranteed freedom of religious belief. After all, in the dark days of the war, the Russian Orthodox Church was on the side of the Soviet state and fought fascism in its own way. Would that have been possible if the church in our country had not been free? We have religious people, but that doesn't create problems for them or for Soviet society."
>
> The pope and Casaroli listened thoughtfully. Then the pope said, "That's more or less what we thought."

I read that last line at about two in the morning and found myself thinking almost fondly, "Andrei Andreevich, you're incorrigible." For the truth is, one grows to appreciate the man after a while. It is not simply his droning steadfastness, his sour consistency, his utter and sincere loyalty to the Party line, although all of this does help break down one's defenses. There are also the moments of refreshing candor. (About Stalin, for example, Gromyko cautions: "It is wrong to see only his positive side.") There are the frequent grumpy asides. (About Ambassador Joseph Davies, Gromyko writes: "In the manner of exalted twentieth-century Anglo-Saxons, he liked to prance about on a horse.") From time to time Gromyko will divulge something personal, such as his love for volleyball and his dislike of Elvis Presley, and the effect can be overpowering; it is like learning that the Second Law of Thermodynamics prefers Pepsi to Coke.

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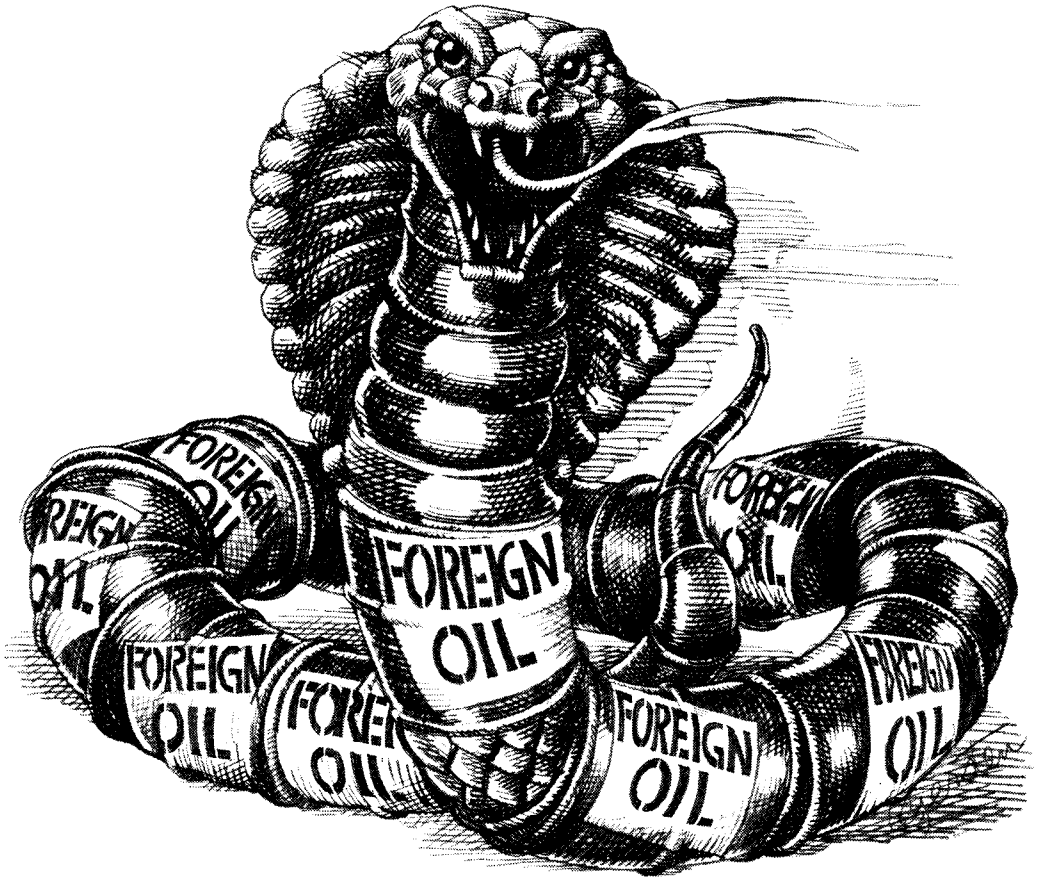

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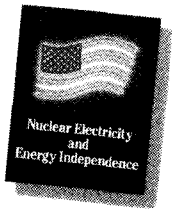

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Eventually one warms to the unwarmable. Indeed, by the end of the night, I even came to understand how the West German foreign minister, Walter Scheel, could announce to Gromyko the birth of a daughter and declare, "We're going to call her Andrea in your honor."

Well, perhaps not quite.

CULLEN MURPHY is managing editor of *The Atlantic*.

Gorbachev's back is to the wall.

SURVIVAL MODE

By Annie Kriegel

It came as no great surprise when the newly installed Mikhail Gorbachev started out by saying everything bad he could think of about his predecessors, such as labeling the Brezhnev decades the "period of stagnation." Even under a system of proletarian dictatorship, it's good politics to announce one's arrival by denigrating what came before.

But two points soon began to irritate observers. The first is that glasnost, rather than leading just to a critical assessment of the present, however harsh, or to the kind of true freedom of thought and expression that takes critical debate for granted, led instead to a tremendous outpouring of rage, an unprecedented popular revulsion against seventy years of errors and crimes.

Of course, none of the revelations that prompted this outpouring came as news to Westerners—at least not to those who hadn't been living in a fellow-traveling dreamworld. The information had long been available in the West, albeit in books often dismissed for primitive anti-communism; the only difference was that now it was being acknowledged as true. But the explosion was so strong that Gorbachev's attempt, on the Khrushchevian model, to spare Lenin and Leninism while trying to blame everything on Stalin and Stalinism was a futile charade. In fact, the entire Communist culture was reduced to rubble.

The second point that for five years has baffled observers—those not blinded by Gorbymania—is what might be called Gorbachev's political bulimia. In the usual fashion he secured for himself dictatorial powers, styled as usual as eminently democratic. But he didn't stop there. He has tinkered endlessly with the forms of his power, not merely to consolidate his dictatorship over the Party, as "they" had all done before him, but to change its legal source from the Party to the Soviets (state councils)—which, absent a real multiparty system, cannot really change much of anything.

The most astonishing thing of all, then, was that the more Gorbachev went from victory to victory against his "conservative" or "radical" adversaries, the more he seemed in command of absolute, unassailable power, the less he seemed able to use that power to undertake any kind of real reforms. Or rather, of all the loudly proclaimed reforms that followed one after the other, not one seemed to be geared toward anything concrete.

Even so, at the level of the intercontinental Communist system, Gorbachev's "new thinking" seemed to be working very efficiently. The Reagan arms buildup had demonstrated that the U.S.S.R. could no longer keep pace. It was thus necessary to take the path of negotiation; and since negotiations would be going on anyway, why not take the opportunity to get rid of the expensive and faltering Brezhnevian forays, which, at the system's Third World periphery, had turned into overt, permanent conflicts? The idea, as the Red Army's retreat from Afghanistan demonstrated, was to abandon too-remote and too-dispersed supply lines in such a way as to preserve, under the guise of "governments of national reconciliation," the pro-Soviet bases already in place in Central America and Southeast Asia.

But this deft and well-executed maneuver was derailed by an unexpected development: the October Revolution. The community of socialist states began an irresistible process of destabilization in the wake of Gorbachev's banal decision to bring the leadership teams of Central Europe into line with the Gorbachev model. The plan was to get rid of the somnolent foot-draggers and replace them with Gorbachev-style reformers. This process went smoothly in Bulgaria, not so smoothly (though still within the framework of the plan) in Romania. But in East Germany and Hungary, what were meant to be tidy palace revolts opened the floodgates to torrential and multishaped (though bloodless) popular insurrections. The local Communist parties collapsed. Still, maybe it wasn't too late to save the day, and the "Common European Home," by building a German-Soviet condominium on the foundation of a political alliance between left-wing social democrats and reform Communists.

The elections in East Germany and Hungary, to say nothing of those in Nicaragua, have upset these calculations for the time being. One by one, in truly free elections, the people of Eastern Europe have shown they want a clean break with everything that smacks of socialism.

Can Gorbachev halt the disintegration of communism at the borders of the Soviet Union, given that he is no longer on good terms even with the world's few surviving Communist holdouts (Cuba, North Korea, China, etc.)? It's looking increasingly doubtful. The failure of perestroika in the economic arena and the radical yearning for independence—which bars the possibility of reassembling the non-Russian republics into a revamped Soviet Union—leave Gorbachev without a logical

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course of action. Left to its own devices, why should Russia not go the way of East Berlin, Prague, and Budapest? Gorbachev's struggle now is purely for survival. How far will he take it? And for how long? The army's growing shadow does not in itself answer the question. For the Soviet army—apparently so powerful, as the Shah's once seemed—may already be in the process of disintegrating, and so is unable to intervene.

ANNIE KRIEGEL writes frequently for the French newspaper *Le Figaro*, where this essay first appeared. Translated by Laura E. Obolensky and Hendrik Hertzberg.

The Fonz and his buddies.

GOD'S CHOSEN

By Nicholas Goldberg

When Senator Alfonse D'Amato set out for the Lithuanian border in April, in what he said was a symbolic gesture of solidarity with the beleaguered nationalists, he went with the wholehearted approval of *The New York Post*. "I'LL KICK HIM IN THE BALTICS," declared the headline on page one that morning, with a picture of a macho D'Amato facing a worried Mikhail Gorbachev. But D'Amato's trip may have been less a plea for Lithuanian independence than an attempt to divert attention. Even as D'Amato was waving goodbye at the airport, investigators were knocking on doors in his hometown of Island Park, New York, the tiny, seaside village on Long Island where the senator grew up, and where twenty-five years of secrets are finally beginning to catch up with him.

Island Park first emerged from obscurity last June when *The New York Times* discovered a nine-year-old HUD audit suggesting that five or six federally subsidized houses there had been distributed to politically connected villagers—including a cousin of D'Amato's and the son of Geraldine McGann, a D'Amato protégé who later served as HUD's regional administrator in New York. Nothing in the audit, however, linked D'Amato directly to the HUD program, and the resilient senator vehemently denied any involvement. "I had no role in the program, and I had no role in distributing the houses," he defiantly told reporters at the time. "Consequently, I can't see in any way, shape, or place how I could be named in this."

But federal and local investigations are now beginning to yield results. Although no charges have been brought against D'Amato—and Justice Department officials have repeatedly said that he is not a target of their investigation—evidence has emerged, which, if accurate, would tie him to an increasingly ugly scandal involving not only favoritism, fraud, and the misuse of federal funds, but also a long-term pattern of housing discrimination.

The connections appeared slowly. Shortly after opening the probe, investigators learned that one of the forty-four HUD houses built in Island Park had gone to the son of Miriam Madden, D'Amato's longtime personal secretary. A few months later they discovered that the senator had another cousin—Francine Ciccimarro Sniffin—who had been promised a HUD house, but who turned it down at the last minute.

The biggest break in the case came when Harry Scully, who had served as Island Park's "village clerk" for thirty-one years, told investigators that D'Amato had walked into his office in late 1979 or early 1980, looked at the list of applicants for the HUD houses, pointed to the names of his two cousins, and insisted that they both be given houses. Although the law required special outreach efforts to poor and non-white applicants, Scully told prosecutors that in some cases friends and relatives were told to slip their applications under the door before 9 a.m. on the very day the program was announced to the public. According to Scully, D'Amato, who was then one of the top elected officials in Nassau County, checked the list of applicants carefully during the early phases of the program, approving some people and blackballing others.

During a series of interviews with investigators, Scully and others described Island Park as a one-party town, and D'Amato as a heavy-handed political boss. Even after D'Amato was elected to the Senate in 1980, no local issue—from building inspections to the village budget—was too small for his attention. According to Scully, D'Amato would phone in with instructions for local officials, identifying himself, on occasion, only as "God." And even today D'Amato goes most weekends to his house in Island Park, where he is still known by his boyhood nickname of "Tippy."

Acting on Scully's information, prosecutors prepared a draft of a federal lawsuit naming D'Amato as a defendant. But they ultimately took the name off because of a feeling that Scully's story alone was not enough to go on. The $4.5 million lawsuit was filed in March, naming twelve Island Park officials and HUD homeowners as defendants in a complicated scheme to defraud the government and violate civil rights—but it did not name D'Amato.

D'Amato declared the lawsuit a vindication. He continued to deny any involvement in the HUD program and argued that the houses had served their intended purpose of benefiting young, first-time home buyers. He also argued that Island Park is a small village, and that it's no surprise that many people there would be related to one another. He brushed off Scully's charges as the fabrications of a "disgruntled" former official with whom he has waged a long-running feud.

Then, several weeks ago, a new witness was located, and new charges against D'Amato emerged—corroborating several key parts of Scully's story. William Snif-

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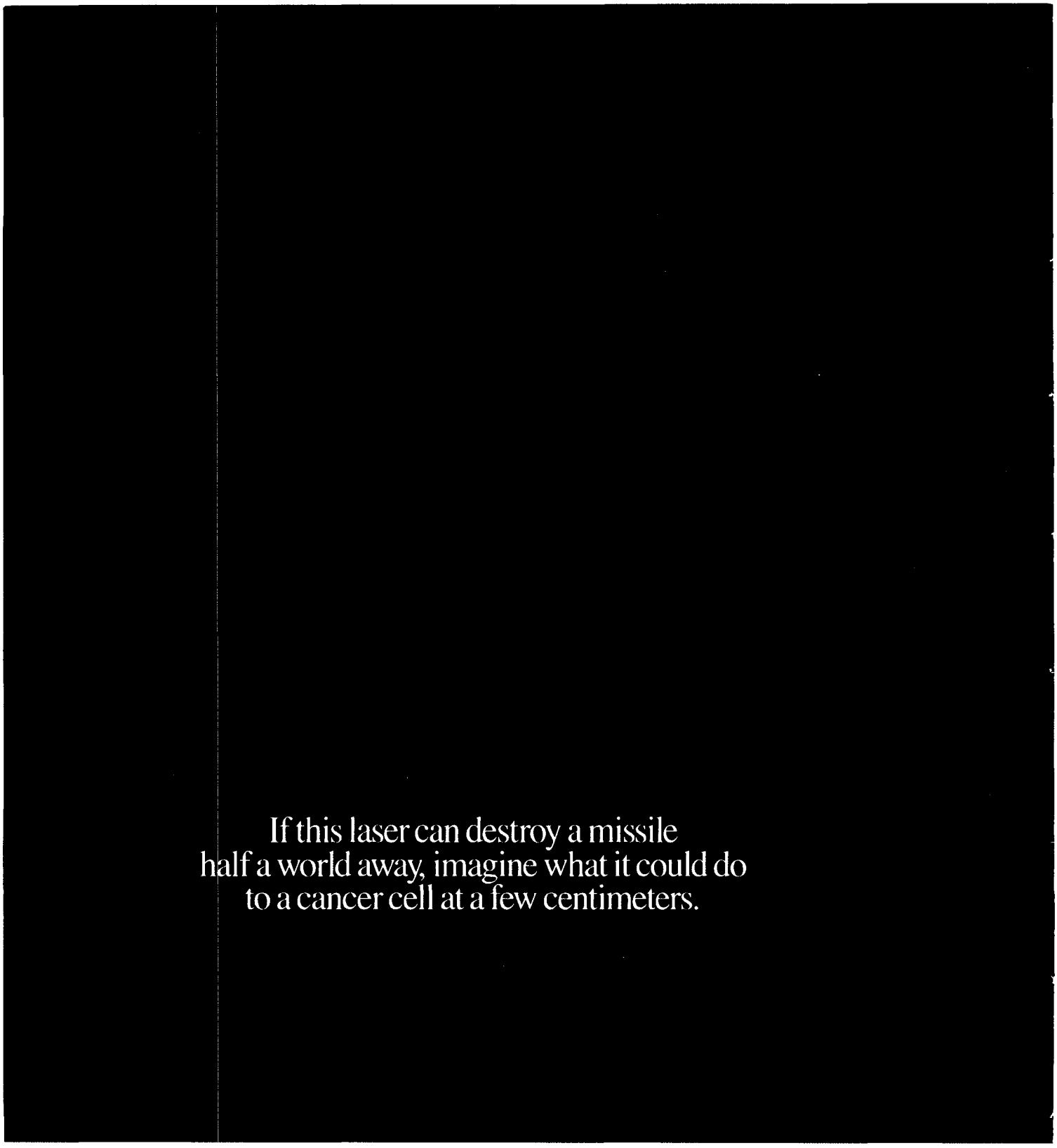

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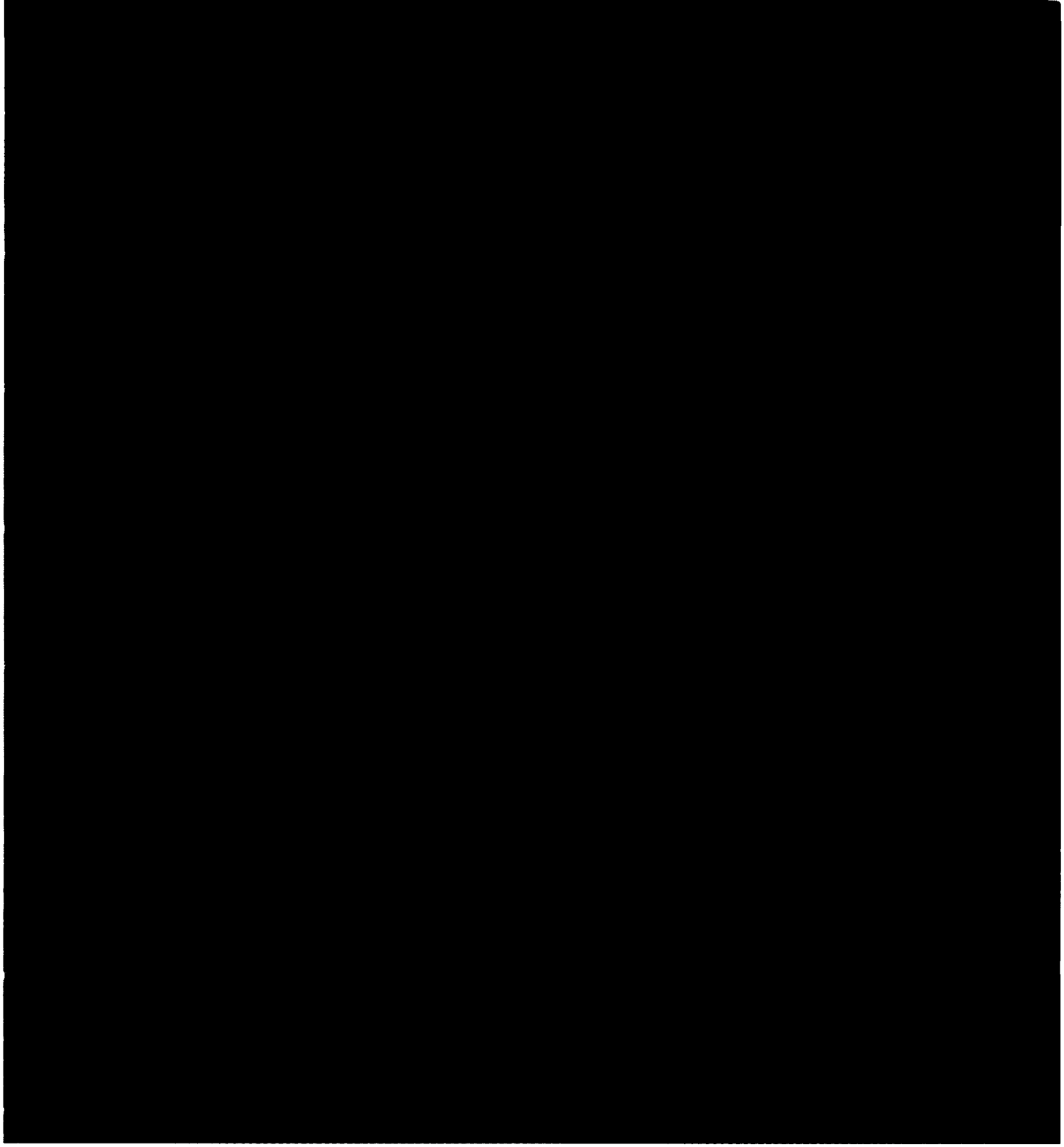

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fin, the ex-husband of D'Amato's cousin Francine Ciccimarro, told FBI agents that he was in the room when his then-wife called D'Amato to ask for help in getting one of the houses. When she hung up, Sniffin told investigators, she turned to him and said, "We got it." Several days later, Sniffin said, he and his wife were taken out by an Island Park employee and allowed to select their favorite of five vacant sites where the houses were to be built.

Sniffin and his wife never moved in. They eventually withdrew from the program for personal reasons, and the low-cost house that was built on the site they chose was sold instead to Francine's brother, Anthony Ciccimarro—another cousin of D'Amato's.

Sniffin's charges help tighten the case against D'Amato. But law enforcement sources acknowledge that there would be problems with Sniffin as a witness. For one thing, his acrimonious divorce from D'Amato's cousin would certainly become an issue in any trial. Furthermore, Sniffin's information is hearsay: he was not on the telephone with D'Amato and cannot swear to what D'Amato told Francine.

Even as the investigation continues—and even as a grand jury continues to hear evidence in Nassau County—the scandal is broadening in other directions. Last month *Newsday* reported on another HUD project in Island Park—a senior citizen home with about forty apartments—that is also crowded with politically connected people. Among those who received subsidized apartments there were Sniffin's mother and father and another relative of Geraldine McGann and her husband, Doc. And that's just the beginning. The village justice, who bought one of the original HUD houses for $40,000 and then sold it for $150,000 six years later, also had a grandfather in the senior citizen center. A local Republican "executive leader" had a sister in a HUD apartment and a nephew in one of the HUD houses. The former deputy village clerk's mother lives in one of the apartments, as does the mother-in-law of the former village justice.

"I got my mother an apartment in the senior citizen home through politics," says Mike Rizzo, a long-time Island Park resident whose uncle was a village trustee. "I had done a lot of running around for Doc McGann, getting petitions signed and handing out literature, and I thought it was time I got a favor for myself. That's the way the system works in Island Park."

Again, D'Amato has not been tied to the selection process, and again, he has denied any involvement. But HUD officials acknowledge that as head of the Island Park Housing Authority, his close friend McGann may have had a role in handing out the generously subsidized apartments. And further participation in the selection of tenants could have come from Martin Bernstein—D'Amato's longtime friend, contributor, and former campaign aide—whose company was chosen to build and run the project.

Perhaps the ugliest aspect of Island Park's twenty-five-year history with federal housing programs is that the entire "urban renewal" program in the village seems to have been undertaken with a double purpose. Not only were officials able to house politically favored friends and relatives, but they also managed to use federal funds to rid the village of black and low-income residents.

The senior citizen center, for example, was built with HUD funds in 1980 on the site of a building that had been demolished four years earlier—where twenty-two poor, mostly black families had been summarily evicted in a deal that Scully says was cut between D'Amato and the landlord. The site where Ciccimarro's HUD house was built used to sport an old, dilapidated boarding house that the village demolished using federal funds—again displacing at least seven poor people. Another boarding house was condemned and demolished overnight—at D'Amato's urging, according to Scully—and a village employee ran through the building telling the twenty-five tenants to get out, without even giving them enough notice to gather their belongings.

D'Amato says he is proud of his role in removing slumlords from Island Park. And Anthony Cornachio, the attorney representing the village, has said that Island Park officials are pleased with how they've changed their village. "There were drunks . . . and rooming houses and garbage, and it was not consistent with the type of normal suburban environment you would want," he told *Newsday*. "These were eliminated and good structures were put up, occupied by good people."

But the upshot is that nearly 100 HUD-subsidized houses and apartments were created in the little village of Island Park, and only one went to a black—despite the rules requiring special outreach efforts. At the same time, somewhere between fifty and 100 poor, black residents of Island Park were displaced during the late 1970s and early 1980s, their buildings torn down and their families moved. Census figures show that the number of black residents in Island Park dropped from 116 to thirty-five between 1970 and 1980 out of a total population of about 9,000.

Right now the investigations are still open. But the Nassau district attorney's office is facing a variety of legal obstacles to building a criminal case, and for now there's no plan to add D'Amato's name to the federal lawsuit. Scully's lawyer, Daniel Komansky, says it may turn into just another case of "loyal soldiers on the front line getting blasted by the artillery, while the general remains safely behind."

D'Amato's approval rating is down to 36.9 percent, according to a recent statewide poll—a precipitate drop from his 62.9 percent high during the 1986 campaign. But there's a long time to go before the 1992 election, and although the media has been tough, the more critical coverage has fallen off in recent months. With a few more trips to Lithuania, D'Amato could be back on top in no time.

NICHOLAS GOLDBERG is a reporter for *Newsday*.

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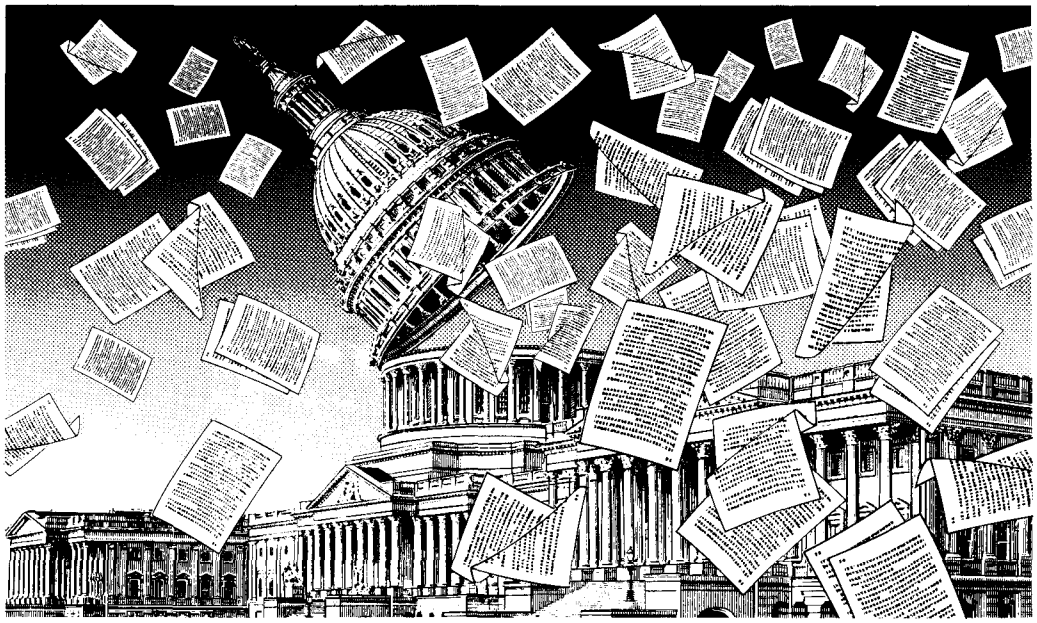

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LEADERS TO FOLLOW

By Fred Barnes

You could hear a pin drop when Democratic congressional leaders learned of Senator Daniel P. Moynihan's proposal last December to cut sharply the Social Security payroll tax. They said almost nothing and didn't commit themselves to anything. But the idea caught on anyway. A smattering of big-name Democrats (Governor Mario Cuomo of New York, for one), nearly every Democratic political consultant, and some conservative Republicans ardently embraced the measure. Cuomo said it would make clear whose side Democrats are on, namely average working people who now pay more in FICA than in federal income taxes.

As the clamor grew noisier, congressional leaders were compelled to create a task force, headed by House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt, to study the proposal. The other members were Moynihan and four committee chairmen: Lloyd Bentsen of the Senate Finance Committee, Jim Sasser of the Senate Budget Committee, Dan Rostenkowski of the House Ways and Means Committee, and Leon Panetta of the House Budget Committee. The chances that this group would endorse the Moynihan cut or some version of it were slim to begin with. The chances soon got worse. Sasser endorsed the cut, but Bentsen came out against it, Rostenkowski was always opposed, and Panetta thought it lost too much revenue.

Well into March Gephardt talked as if the task force were seriously considering the issue. In fact, the task force never met. Gephardt talked separately to the members, but that's not the same as gathering in a room and trying to hammer out a position. Gephardt liked the proposal well enough and might have pushed it if House Speaker Thomas Foley had given him the signal. But Foley was cool to the idea, and Gephardt wound up urging a tax credit scheme that Moynihan thought was nuts. It went nowhere. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell was favorably disposed toward a payroll tax cut, but he was unwilling to lean on Bentsen. So the Moynihan proposal began to fade. The Bush White House, which never liked the idea, was enormously relieved.

Now, here's the point: on the best new Democratic idea in years, one that terrifies Republicans, Democratic congressional leaders clutched, choked, failed to act. Gephardt calls Bush "the hesitation president." He's right, but the Democratic leadership he's part of makes Bush seem bold (at times, anyway).

On Lithuania, the leaders raised no stink when Bush refused to recognize the independent republic, pressure the Soviets publicly, or delay announcement of a new summit with Mikhail Gorbachev. On child care Foley stood aloof for months as House Democrats fought bitterly over the sweep and cost of legislation. He moved only after one faction, led by Representatives Tom Downey of New York and George Miller of California and backed by Rostenkowski, entered into serious negotiations with the White House. On clean air, Mitchell abandoned a tough bill approved by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and took the less risky tack of compromising with the White House.

The one issue on which Democratic leaders have ostentatiously challenged Bush is the administration's courtship of Chinese leaders in the wake of Tiananmen Square. This is what used to be called Afghanistanism—hot concern over an issue that's far away, has little domestic political resonance, and thus is risk-free. In his response to Bush's State of the Union address, Foley cited China policy as his primary example of how Democrats differ from the administration. (He didn't mention the payroll tax cut at all.) "It was wrong for the president to veto a bill that would have safeguarded Chinese students in America," Foley said. In the Senate, Mitchell tried to overturn Bush's veto as the first order of business this year. His tactic backfired. He had talked too much about slam-dunking the president, prompting Republicans (even those who dislike Bush's China policy) to unite and sustain the veto.

After the bumpy reign of House Speaker Jim Wright and Senate Majority Leader Robert Byrd, Democrats assumed happier days would come under Foley and Mitchell. But what Democrats gained in television presence (Foley, in particular, is smooth and likable on the tube) they gave up in toughness. Foley and Mitchell are the weakest congressional leaders since John McCormack and Carl Albert were House Speakers. It's not as if Foley and Mitchell are up against a political juggernaut. Bush is popular, but he has practically no real agenda and few fervent allies on Capitol Hill. He's ready to be dominated, only Democratic leaders aren't up to it.

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"We'd like to tell you why."

Sponsored children pictured: Pedro, Gustavo, Carlos, Johnny, Andres, Jaime, and Laki.

Photo by Michael Fitz

"For 24 years we've been Save the Children sponsors. We began by sponsoring a desperately poor little girl from the mountains of Colombia—a child who lived in a one-room hut and could only dream of attending school.

"It was a joy to share our good fortune with her and to know that she was blossoming because someone cared enough to help. It made us want to help other children in the same way. And now we sponsor seven children around the world. Children we have come to understand and love. Thanks to Save the Children.

"If you've ever wondered 'What can one person do?' — the answer is 'You can help save a child.' If you are touched by the plight of needy children, there is no better way than Save the Children to reach out to them with caring, comfort, and support.

"Please join us as a Save the Children sponsor. We've seen the wonders they can work. You'll see how much you can really do—in the eyes and in the progress of the child you sponsor. You'll bring new hope to a child you'll know personally, as we do, through photographs...reports...and letters you can exchange, if you wish.

"You'll see despair turn to hope, and you'll feel the personal reward of knowing what your love and support can do.

"The cost is so little. The need is so great. Won't you join us as Save the Children sponsors?"

A sponsorship costs only $22 a month. Just 72¢ a day. Because 58 years of experience has taught us that direct handouts are the least effective way of helping children, your sponsorship contributions are not distributed in this way. Instead, combined with other sponsors', they are used to help children in the most effective way possible — by helping the entire community with projects and services such as health care, education, food production, and nutrition. So hardworking people can help themselves and save their own children.

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One reason is who they are. Foley and Mitchell (Gephardt, too) are nice, reasonable people. Attack politics and party discipline don't come easily to them. Foley, for instance, refused to bar Democrats who voted for Bush's capital gains tax cut last year from getting better committee assignments. Another reason is how they view their jobs. Foley sees his role as dual: he's both bipartisan Speaker and leader of House Democrats. He tends to err on the side of being a clean-fingernails Speaker, leaving the heavy political lifting to Gephardt. No wonder Republicans love him. Foley often takes no position on an issue.

Even when offered a chance, Foley won't rein in renegade Democrats. In March Rostenkowski approached him and Gephardt with a proposal for raising taxes and curbing Social Security benefits. This was in conflict with the leadership's position that Democrats should avoid a tax hike unless the president's on board (he wasn't). Rostenkowski said he was willing to drop his proposal. "If it embarrasses you or the party, I won't go with it," he said. "But I'm going with it unless you say no." According to Rostenkowski, Foley commented that the proposal "won't be well received" by other Democrats. But Foley didn't say no. Rostenkowski went ahead, creating more confusion about the Democratic stance on taxes. Later Democratic officials said it wasn't possible for Foley to bar the proposal since Rostenkowski had already submitted an article outlining it to *The Washington Post*. What if he had? I'll bet that wouldn't have deterred Jim Wright from muzzling him.

In defense of their pathetic showing against Bush, Democrats argue that their first responsibility is to govern, not to make political points. With a Democratic Congress and Republican White House, "We have the American version of coalition government," says Senator Tom Daschle of South Dakota, Mitchell's right-hand man. If Democrats don't compromise with the White House, he says, there will be no action. But they take their willingness to compromise too far. Rather than loathing their patsy role, Democrats revel in it. They congratulate themselves for acting in a way congressional Republicans never would. True, Republicans play the game differently. Their strategy in the late 1970s was to plug their themes (high taxes, excessive spending) relentlessly. Thus they set the stage for President Reagan to carry out his (and their) conservative policies in the 1980s. In a less concerted way, Democrats did the same in the late 1950s, clearing the way for the New Frontier and Great Society in the 1960s.

Today's Democrats have settled into a comfortable partnership that the president, because he gets more press coverage, is bound to dominate. "It's much harder for us to be on offense," laments Gephardt. "The Congress is not meant to be the leading force in the country. It's set up to be a check on presidential power. It can put an imprint on things. From time to time, it can set policy, but that's rare." Almost as rare as a Democrat winning the White House, which is something congressional Democrats have pretty much abandoned hope of. The way they see it, serving as point men in that long struggle makes no sense.

Mitchell faced an opportunity to strike a telling blow in that struggle in March when clean air legislation came to the Senate floor. He balked. The Environment and Public Works Committee had approved a bill that was far tougher than Bush's on nearly everything—acid rain, tailpipe emissions, toxics. Mitchell liked the bill, which, he says, "had become the minimum acceptable bill to the environmental community." He considered adopting it as the leadership's position. But there was a problem: not enough votes to break a filibuster that was certain to be mounted by Republicans and conservative Democrats. Mitchell understood his choice perfectly. If he backed the committee, "We'd probably have no bill and get an issue." Then Democrats could pound Bush in the 1990 campaign (and perhaps 1992) as an environment phony whose allies nixed cleaner air. And maybe, if all went well, a stringent clean air bill might pass later and Mitchell would be vindicated. But the odds were long, and he decided not to chance it. "My disposition was to get a bill" this year, Mitchell said. He negotiated a compromise with the White House. Environmentalists screamed, but the Mitchell-Bush bill passed the Senate, 89-11. Given a choice between making policy and making political war, Mitchell made policy—Bush's policy. Coalition government again.

At least Mitchell did made a choice. Foley, as Speaker, acts like a judge prepared to wait indefinitely as squabbling parties negotiate a settlement. "Foley is very much a collegial leader," says Representative Steny Hoyer, chairman of the House Democratic Caucus. "That takes more time. Jim Wright had a different style. Foley's is to talk to everybody, synthesize the ideas, and come up with a consensus. Wright's was to think about an idea, put it on the table, then move ahead. He tried to create consensus after the fact." Actually Foley doesn't usually forge a consensus. He simply prays for one to materialize. If it doesn't, he's paralyzed.

Foley's laissez-faire approach allowed a name-calling dispute among Democrats on child care to fester for nearly a year. By last fall two committees had approved separate bills, both of which were put in the 1990 budget reconciliation bill. Foley stayed out, and the two versions wound up in the House-Senate conference, where the disagreement again wasn't resolved. Still Foley didn't step in. So child care had to be put off until this year. This ignited a furious attack on Downey and Miller, the authors of one version, by Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund. Downey called her "immature." Foley promised that "a historic child care bill will be passed, sent to the president, and signed into law in this Congress," meaning in 1990.

He lived up to his promise, barely. In January, with no action by Foley in sight, Downey and Miller engaged the White House in negotiations. They figured a compromise with the White House would be closer to what they wanted (tax credits, vouchers, block grants) than

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one with rival Democrats. With a compromise nearly completed, John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, summoned Rostenkowski. "They wanted to hear it from the heavy gun that I was going to stand fast" for the Downey-Miller position, says Rostenkowski. He said he was. The compromise would have gotten about 350 votes in the House, Rostenkowski says. Finally, Foley stepped in. "Danny, you can't do this me," he told Rostenkowski. "You can't negotiate" with the White House. "Tom," replied Rostenkowski, a loyal Democrat, "I'm going to be on your side. Just don't make it painful." Foley produced a bill close to what Downey, Miller, and Rostenkowski wanted. Of course, he could have done that months earlier and avoided all the political bloodshed.

Democrats, after all, aren't masochists. But they are thickheaded. After better than a decade of losing to Republicans on the tax issue, Democratic honchos in Congress still don't have a clue. At the Democratic Leadership Council conference in New Orleans in March, Bentsen complained that Bush talks about "no new taxes and sends us budgets larded with crypto-taxes—'user fees' and 'surcharges' and 'transaction levies' and 'payroll charge collection acceleration.' As one of our colleagues recently put it, this Republican pledge of no new taxes is pure Bushlips." No kidding. Why does Bush get away with it, while Democrats can't? Republicans have immunized themselves by proposing tax cuts, enacting some of them, and regularly denouncing tax hikes. When Bush proposes a disguised tax increase or two, it's tolerated as minor backsliding. Democrats, meanwhile, yearn for higher taxes and rail against GOP tax cuts. Should they propose a tax increase, they're zinged as big taxers who are at it again.

This is where Moynihan comes in. Cutting the payroll tax is perfectly justified. The tax is highly regressive. It's a tax on jobs. Besides, there's what supply-sider Jude Wanniski calls a "surplus surplus" in the Social Security trust fund. The surplus is larger than required for solvency into the next century. That permits at least a mini-Moynihan tax cut. So much for the merits. What a payroll tax cut does for Democrats politically is allow them to raise other taxes with impunity. It immunizes them. They can probably get away with raising the taxes of the rich, boosting sin taxes, etc., as long as they cut the taxes of the low- and middle-income folks. To do themselves any good, Democrats must wind up with a net revenue increase.

Democrats have been crippled by the deficit and GOP opposition to raising taxes. Mitchell and Foley made things worse by vowing not to press for higher taxes without Bush's agreement. This leaves the decision on taxes entirely in the hands of Republicans, who are happy with a deficit that rules out big new spending programs. Why should Republicans raise taxes? But Democrats like new programs. Without them, they turned sour and selfish in the 1980s. Democratic populists want national health insurance and some form of long-term health care. Democratic nationalists, eager to halt what they see as the nation's economic decline, want improved highways, bridges, and airports, beefed up education programs, more high-tech research and development. Democrats can't get any of this without higher taxes. The peace dividend won't be big enough.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Given the leadership's indifference, it's taken a conspiracy to keep the Moynihan tax cut alive. A former aide of Moynihan's, Mike McCurry, is press secretary of the Democratic National Committee. He, Moynihan, and Democratic national chairman Ron Brown worked together privately to get the DNC to endorse the tax cut in March. McCurry and two other DNC officials, Paul Tully and Melissa Moss, plotted with Al From and Will Marshall of the moderate DLC to have it formally back the cut too. As a result, the Moynihan cut got a second wind that even Foley felt. On April 22 he said that if the Senate passes it, there's "a good chance" the House will move on it too. Maybe he's catching on. •

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A simple cure for chronic incumbency.

TWELVE IS ENOUGH

By Hendrik Hertzberg

Before you automatically reject the proposal now making the rounds for a twelve-year limit for members of Congress as a dreadful idea—an anti-democratic, anti-political, mechanistic "reform" that like so many other "reforms" would most likely end up making things worse, a bit of mischievous tinkering with the precious Constitution that has served us so well for 200 years, a misguided gimmick that ignores the *real* problem (PACs, polls, gerrymandering, special interests, negative ads, cowardly politicians, ignorant citizens, whatever) and is probably nothing but a Republican plot anyway—before you agree with all these dismissals and turn your attention to more pressing matters, consider three numbers.

Number number one: 37.1. Yes, it's a voter turnout figure, the op-ed writer's best friend. This particular figure represents the percentage of American over-eighteens who bestirred themselves to go to the polls in 1986, the last time the citizenry was invited to vote for members of Congress without the added glitz of a presidential contest. Compared with the turnout in any other arguably democratic country—France, Nicaragua, Norway, Hungary, El Salvador, Israel, Turkey, Italy, Lithuania, you name it—this is pathetic. It was the lowest since 1926, not counting 1944, when World War II made voting inconvenient for large numbers of people. And the public's true interest in House elections is even lower. According to *Congressional Quarterly*'s Rhodes Cook, if you factor out districts where there was a contest for governor or U.S. senator to lure people out, the turnout was a scandalous 27.6 percent. Only the most perverse elitists argue that this state of affairs is anything but a symptom of extreme political ill health.

Number number two: 98.3. This is the percentage of incumbent members of the House of Representatives who won their "races" for re-election in 1988, up from 98 percent flat in 1966. According to a recent study by David C. Huckabee of the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress, this number has remained in the 90s since 1974, and it is currently the highest it has ever been since the middle of President Washington's first term. And because more incumbents now choose to run than ever before, the re-election rate for the House as a whole is now in the 90s, too—92.4 percent last time out, to be exact. In the 19th century this figure tended to hover somewhere between 40 percent and 70 percent, once dropping to as low as 24 percent (in 1842); it hit the 70s after World War I and has been climbing more or less steadily ever since.

The 98.3 figure actually understates the political stasis of the House. Of the 409 incumbents who ran for re-election, six were defeated in November. But five of these had been tainted by one sort of scandal or another. So the grand total of representatives who lost their seats as a consequence of what we normally think of as politics—that is, a process in which the electorate chooses between competing sets of programs and policies—was exactly one.

Number number three: 36. This is how many years a single party, the Democrats, has controlled the lower house of the national legislature of the United States. By contrast, the British House of Commons has changed hands four times since 1954, the French Chamber of Deputies three times, the West German Bundestag five times, the Canadian House of Commons five times, and the Indian Lok Sabha three times. When it comes to one-party legislative dominance in serious countries, only Japan, Mexico, South Africa, and the Soviet Union are even in our league. And in the last two, unlike in the United States, the ruling party is a pretty good bet to lose the next election. No moral equivalence intended, of course. Or deserved.

In the light of numbers number two and three, the wonder is that number number one is so high. In the overwhelming majority of congressional districts, voting is increasingly an irrational act. Why bother, when 85 percent of the incumbents are getting more than 60 percent of the vote in their districts, when the *average* incumbent is getting 73.5 percent, when sixty-three members are returned with Brezhnevian majorities exceeding 94 percent? Except in the handful of districts where there are open seats or close races, voting may still make sense as a civic sacrament—as a way of refreshing one's soul with a sense of belonging to a democratic community—but it makes no sense as a form of political action. Better to spend the hour or so it takes to vote writing checks and sending them off to candidates in contested districts.

Against this background, the idea of a twelve-year limit begins to acquire a certain logic. Such proposals

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Burning Your Money Won't Clean the Air.

Cleaner air is a national priority for everyone.

So is maintaining a strong economy.

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But not if Congress thinks Americans have money to burn.

The U.S. Senate just passed an unnecessarily expensive piece of clean air legislation that could cost up to $50 billion annually. The House is working on a similar measure that, while less expensive, imposes severe restrictions that also could limit economic growth in various regions of the country.

These bills will hit American workers and consumers hard. The Senate version could eliminate up to 750,000 jobs and seriously impact 3 million others. Prices will increase – for electricity, fuel, and many other essential goods and services. Don't let the House of Representatives add even more unreasonable requirements to burden consumers and businesses that are the backbone of a strong economy.

Everyone wants cleaner air. And everyone wants Congress to pass new clean air legislation this year. But, Americans deserve a clean air law they can afford. Let your Representatives in Congress know that burning up our prosperity won't clear the skies.

CAWG CLEAN AIR WORKING GROUP

Let's protect our environment *and* our economy.

Clean Air Working Group, 818 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006, 202/857-0370.

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are neither new nor flakily marginal. A limit on congressional service was considered at the founding constitutional convention (which laid it aside as "entering too much into detail"), and the idea has won the support, over the decades, of a bipartisan list of luminaries including Abraham Lincoln, Harry Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and John F. Kennedy. The current campaign for a constitutional amendment that would limit service to six two-year terms for House members and two six-year terms for senators (with an exemption for the present crew of incumbents, of course) is led by Senators Gordon Humphrey, Republican of New Hampshire, and Dennis DeConcini, Democrat of Arizona. Their ten co-sponsors span the Senate's ideological spectrum, from Jake Garn on the right to Nancy Kassebaum in the center to Tom Daschle on the left.

Even so, truth in packaging compels the admission that the current push is basically a Republican scam. All but three of the Senate co-sponsors are Republicans. The twelve-year limit was endorsed in the 1988 Republican platform. The letterhead pressure group promoting the idea, something called Americans to Limit Congressional Terms, is run out of a Republican political consultant's office and consists mostly of Republican ex-congressmen and state legislators (though it does include a few Democrats, of whom the most distinguished is former eight-term Representative Donald M. Fraser, now mayor of Minneapolis). Republicans are understandably eager to support any lunatic notion that holds out the promise of helping them break the Democratic stranglehold on Capitol Hill. But this just might be one of those rare cases where the narrow self-interest of the Republican Party is congruent with the public good.

The arguments for the term limit are surprisingly persuasive, especially where the House is concerned. Almost all of them are variations on a single theme: breaking the Gordian knot of entrenched incumbency, which distorts our democracy from the polling place clear up to the Senate and (especially) House chambers. Out in that fabled land beyond the Beltway, the term limit would mean that at least once every twelve years (and probably more frequently), every citizen would get a fighting chance to vote in a genuinely *political* congressional election, which is to say one that would turn not on the goodies that good old Congressman Thing has procured for the district or the Social Security checks he has expedited or the campaign funds he has raised or the newsletters he has franked, but rather on the competing political visions and programs of parties and candidates. But the most interesting, and salutary, effects of the limit would be the ways in which it would change the political ecology of Congress itself.

A twelve-year limit would necessarily bring an end to the much-reformed but still pervasive and undemocratic rule of seniority. The House Speaker, the chairmen of important committees, and the other potentates of Congress have long been elevated by a decades-long, quasi-feudal process of favor-trading, personal alliance-building, ladder-climbing, and "getting along by going along." The term limit would leave Congress little choice but to elect its chiefs democratically, on the basis of the policies and the leadership qualities of the candidates. Like the Speakers of many of our state legislatures, these leaders would tend to be vigorous men and women in their forties and fifties—people in the mold of Bill Gray, Stephen Solarz, and Henry Hyde. The Dingells and Rostenkowskis would remain where they belong, on the back benches or in private life. This would be an important gain. And the frequent turnover of leaders—one who served more than six years would be a rarity—would be a spur both to brisk accomplishment and to attentiveness to the concerns and needs of the country.

The seniority system occasionally produces good leaders as well as bad ones, but there is no denying that it is grossly biased in favor of the most politically sluggish and unchanging parts of the nation. A swing district—one marked by close elections, and the robust debate and clamorous participation that close elections bring—has a hard time keeping somebody in office long enough to survive the glacial process by which congressional power is accumulated. It is precisely such districts that are most likely to elect representatives alive to the cutting-edge problems that most urgently require action. Systematically disempowering these districts and the people representing them, as the current arrangement so efficiently does, is insane.

A Congress invigorated by frequent infusions of new blood would be a more responsive, more democratic, more varied place. So would a Congress whose majority regularly changed from one party to the other, which a term limit would unquestionably promote. However bad this might be for the short-term partisan interests of Democrats like me, it would be good for the long-term interests of the country—and the party, too. Critics of the term limit idea argue that it would "weaken" Congress; and so it would, but in ways that would strengthen both its most useful functions and democratic governance in general. The one-party Congress has become a world unto itself, and the long period of Republican control of the presidency and Democratic control of Congress has produced an insidious mentality on Capitol Hill. The leaders of the Democratic congressional majority, veterans of decades of supremacy in their own little universe, no longer constitute an opposition. They conceive of themselves as ins, not outs—as leaders of one-half of a permanent coalition government. They may imagine that their own fiefdoms are secure, but their party is reaping almost all of the penalties of incumbency and almost none of the benefits. The foundations of Democratic congressional dominance are being relentlessly undermined, and once the structure topples, as eventually it must, rebuilding it will seem as hopeless a task as destroying it does now. A Congress shaped by a term limit would have a different and healthier mentality. During periods when it was controlled by the party that also controls the White House, it would be energetic in pursuit of that party's program; when in opposition, it would—for a change, and just as energetically—oppose.

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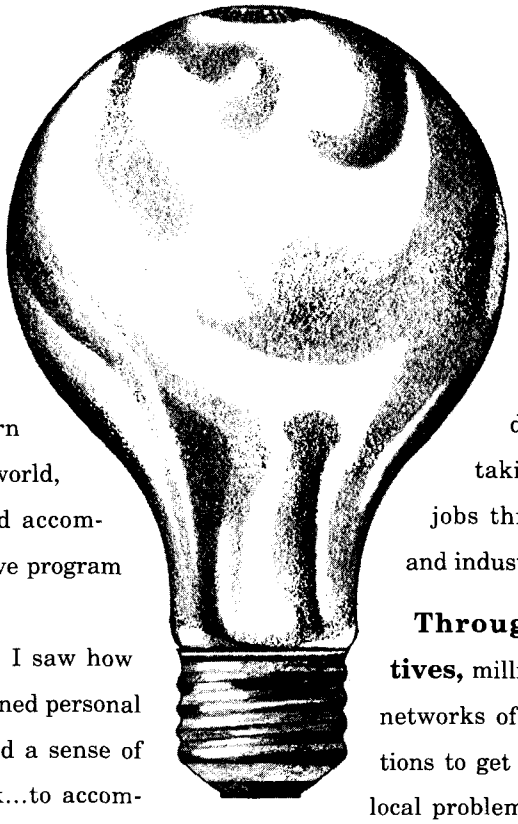
The POWER of IDEAS

By Bob Bergland



Ideas are powerful tools. They've toppled governments...and built countries, including this one.

And their strength is inspiring, especially when they take hold and give people a sense of empowerment. Today, as we see movement toward democracy in Eastern Europe and in other parts of the world, I'm reminded of the strength and accomplishments of the electric cooperative program in this country.

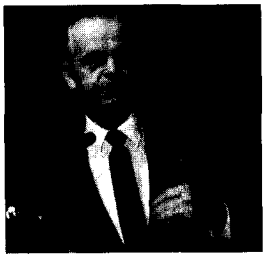
Growing up in rural Minnesota, I saw how people, through cooperatives, combined personal determination, local leadership and a sense of community to make an idea work...to accomplish a goal. And I still see that same determination today.

All across the United States, millions of people have a stake in the ownership and operation of their electric co-ops. Inspired by the idea that people can pool their resources to get things done, they are ensuring their access to reliable electric light and power, a cornerstone of economic opportunity.

And rural electric systems and their consumer-owners are generating more than electricity. Consider some of the country's most pressing needs, and you will find electric cooperatives leading the way. They're helping with health care services and improving water and sewer systems. Or they're donating satellite dishes to schools for distance-learning programs and taking direct action to increase local jobs through small business incubators and industrial ventures.

Through their electric cooperatives, millions of consumers have established networks of people and community organizations to get things done...a proven method for local problem solving, with tremendous potential for strengthening the nation's economy.

Owned by the people they serve, electric cooperatives are proof of the power of ideas.



Bob Bergland is Executive Vice President of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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The many Americans who deplore the decline of political parties in this country ought especially to welcome the term limit idea. By routinely undermining the totally independent, totally personal power bases that long-serving senators and representatives are able to build and maintain under the current system, and by dramatically increasing the number of elections fought on the basis of national issues, the term limit would enhance the strength and coherence of both national parties.

The term limit would mean that at any given moment something like sixty or seventy representatives, and perhaps half that number of senators, would be ineligible to run again. To critics of the proposal, this is one of its worst features. The lame ducks, say the critics, would be "unaccountable" and unresponsive to their constituents' wishes. But Congress's problem is hardly that its members are insufficiently obsessed with re-election, insufficiently attentive to polling data, and insufficiently ardent in pursuit of district pork barrel. The broader public good could only benefit from having a cohort of comparatively disinterested legislators, relieved from re-election pressures and free to consult their consciences as well as their pollsters and contributors. The critics add that the lame ducks might fall prey to corruption, legal or illegal. This phenomenon is not exactly unknown under present arrangements. But it would not be more likely to happen if most of the departing members are still relatively young and still ambitious. Why should they feather their nests at the cost of their reputations?

It's true, as the critics also say, that the term limit would deprive Congress of the services of legislators whom experience has made wise. This would be a real cost. But it would be a cost worth paying to be rid of the much larger number of timeservers who have learned nothing from longevity in office except cynicism, complacency, and a sense of diminished possibility. And it's not as if the job of being a congressman is so difficult that it takes decades to master. It's easier than being a first-rate schoolteacher, for example, and no harder than such jobs as president, governor, or mayor—all of which are regularly performed very well indeed by people who have had no on-the-job experience at all.

In any case, the senators and representatives obliged to seek other employment after twelve years will not vanish from the face of the earth. They will be available for service in the executive branch, in industry, in advocacy groups, and in the academy. Few will become lobbyists, because the turnover on the Hill will quickly make their contacts obsolete and their influence unpeddlable. Many will run for other public offices. Representatives will run for senator, senators will run for representative, and both will run for president, governor, mayor, and state legislator. The result will be more and better competition for these jobs, too. This would not be such a bad thing. Membership in Congress would no longer be a life calling or a lifetime sinecure, but this would not be such a bad thing either. A shot at Congress would be an attractive option for the young and ambitious, for the old but still energetic, and for men and women in midlife who want something more meaningful than whatever success they have earned elsewhere. There would be no shortage of candidates. Though harder to keep, the job would be easier to get.

A Gallup Poll taken in December found that 70 percent of the American public favors the idea of a term limit. This is uncannily close to the percentages of the public that (*a*) think Congress is doing a lousy job and (*b*) keep on voting to re-elect the same old incumbents. Opponents of the term limit say that if voters are so fed up with Congress, there is a simple way for them to do something about it without tinkering with the Constitution: "Throw the rascals out," as *The Chicago Tribune* suggests. So why don't they? "The explanation," writes my friend Michael Kinsley ("Voters in Chains," TNR, April 2), "is that the voters are lazy hypocrites." Maybe they are, but that's not the explanation. A given voter can vote to throw out a maximum of one rascal—three if you count senators. The problem is not individual incumbents; it's chronic incumbency, and trying to solve it by removing one's own incumbent is like treating tuberculosis with a cough drop. To tell a voter he can solve the problem of chronic incumbency by voting against his own representative is to recommend a particularly fruitless form of single-issue politics. The public's disgust is with Congress as an institution, and defeating one member out of 535 won't revamp Congress any more than firing the Deputy Assistant to the President for Scheduling would revamp the White House.

Thanks to seniority, voting to remove a long-serving congressman necessarily means voting to replace him with someone who will have less power. It therefore means voting to deprive one's district (and oneself) of clout. That's fine if you truly think your representative is a rascal. But what if you simply think he's a mediocrity?

There has to be a better way, and the twelve-year limit just might be it. The movement for it deserves the support of all who think Congress is broke and needs fixing—even those who, unlike me, don't think the limit itself is a particularly good idea. Let's be realistic: the chances a term limit amendment will actually get enacted are pretty remote. Congress, for obvious reasons, is not likely to pass it, and the other route—a constitutional convention called by two-thirds of the state legislatures—has never been successfully traveled. But the movement to impose a limit, if it catches fire, could throw enough of a scare into the Congress we've got to induce it to make changes—in campaign financing, PAC spending, access to television, mandatory campaign debates, and so on—that would accomplish most if not all of the same salutary results. The term limit movement is potentially like the nuclear freeze movement of the early 1980s. As a policy blueprint the freeze proposal left a lot to be desired. But the movement did a world of good by forcing the Reagan administration to offer serious arms control proposals of its own, most of which the Russians eventually accepted. The freeze movement was a cri de coeur. So is the term limit movement. Listen, Congress. •

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Breaking a $3,000-a-day habit.

TAKE THE MONEY AND REFORM

By Mark Green

Has the pro-democracy movement finally reached America? Congress is actively considering the most significant reforms since Watergate in the way we fund and elect legislators, and for much the same reason. Apparently the kindling of democracy needs an occasional match of scandal, and not since Watergate has there been such a confluence of incendiary revelations about the money chase in Congress, from the dubious financial transactions of Jim Wright and Tony Coelho to Charles Keating and the S&L disaster. So the Senate this week and the House soon thereafter will take up such long-discussed reforms as a limit on campaign expenditures, free TV time, public financing, and less "soft money," PAC money, and "bundled" money.

The problem of pay-to-play politics is now beyond dispute. Consider these fault- and trend-lines of the congressional culture:

- Alan Cranston and Alfonse D'Amato each spent as much to be elected to the Senate in 1986 as John Kennedy spent to be elected president in 1960: $13 million. Senators raise an average of $3,000 every working day for six years to run for re-election.
- In 1988 PACs favored incumbents over challengers by seven-to-one; after election, incumbents had more funds left over than their challengers spent in toto.
- A survey of 114 members by the bipartisan Center for Responsive Politics found that 20 percent of respondents *admitted* that contributions influenced their votes.
- In 1986 Senator Rudy Boschwitz, Republican of Minnesota, gave all of his $1,000+ contributors a booklet of blue "special access stamps" and ordered his staff to expedite letters with those stamps.
- A freshman Texas congressman has a box in his office for lobbyists to drop $5,000 and $10,000 checks.
- In the past election cycle, a congressman was more likely to die (seven) than lose (six).

Clearly there is a fundamental problem eroding democracy: the infection of public values by market values. There is an unspoken consensus in this country in favor of parallel systems of power—a capitalist economic system and a democratic political system. No one argues that everyone should have an equal balance in the bank, but everyone agrees that all should have a equal vote at the ballot box. This structure collapses when those with unequal wealth in the economy gain similarly unequal influence in government. In the end, money may trample democracy as we are left with a Congress filled with millionaires and heirheads.

Interviews with both members and donors reveal a widespread agreement on the costs of a system that combines legislatively interested money with legislators interested in money. "I can't say that PACs are buying these elections," says former Senator William Proxmire, "but you would have to be a fool to believe they aren't buying something." Members become, in Senator Robert Byrd's phrase, "full-time fund-raisers and part-time legislators," leading to a Congress of unelected staff and absentee politicians. Meanwhile, women and men without wealth or access to it are discouraged from seeking office—the "silent casualties" of the current system, as Judge J. Skelly Wright called them.

The steady rise in money and the decline in voting may be causally connected as voters come to understand how their franchise has been diluted by dollars. And as Representative Dan Glickman of Kansas notes: "Because Democrats and Republicans take money from the same sources, it's harder to differentiate between the parties." (Sixty-four House Democrats, for example, voted for more capital gains tax breaks at a time when the gap between rich and poor is the largest in forty years.)

In terms of the prospects for effective change, the political planets seem to be in alignment. The S&L debacle and other congressional scandals have altered the chemistry in the Senate and the country. After a decade when the Senate did not investigate a single one of its members, seven senators are currently under ethics scrutiny. Suddenly Senators Dave Durenberger and D'Amato, two of those being investigated, have announced they are in favor of the public funding of campaigns (the writer filed the ethics complaint that led to the current investigation of D'Amato. See "Al's Pals," TNR, October 30, 1989); and Republican Senator Warren Rudman of New Hampshire, vice chair of the Senate ethics panel, says he's now leaning in favor as well. (All three opposed the last Congress's pro-reform Byrd-Boren bill, which at its peak gained the support of

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fifty-three senators.) And President Bush, judging from his speech last June on this subject, is rhetorically closer to Ralph Nader than Ronald Reagan. "Today's special interest political action committees and their $160 million war chests," he said, "overshadow the great parties of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln."

At the same time, all four congressional leaders claim to be either enthusiastic or open-minded. Speaker of the House Thomas Foley and Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell say it is a top priority, House Minority Leader Bob Michel announced last December for the first time he'd consider a spending limit, and Senate Republican leader Bob Dole expressed interest in an oxymoronic "flexible cap," a limit on expenditures that can be adjusted upward only if the candidate receives small in-state contributions.

Privately, members say some reform is likely this year, but not necessarily serious reform. For the planets, though aligned, are still miles apart due to reasons of hypocrisy, complexity, and partisanship.

Bush and Dole say they oppose public funding of congressional campaigns, despite the fact that they (with Reagan) received more than $100 million in public financing in the eighties for their national bids. Many Democrats, who for years railed against evil "special interest PAC money," now balk at reducing the role of funds that disproportionately favor the incumbent party (i.e., them).

Each of the 535 experts in Congress, of course, has his or her own views on flexible caps, lobbyists' bundling, "soft money," matching funds, pre-emptible time, tax credits, etc., etc. And the parties have staked out contrasting positions: Republicans want less PAC money, more party money, and no caps or public funds; many Democrats oppose PAC and party reform yet favor caps and public funds.

Real campaign finance reform will be enacted only if Democratic philosophy and Republican frustration combine to ensure that our democracy isn't governed merely by those who win an alms race. This means, at a minimum, putting a ceiling over and a floor under campaign resources so we again have reasonably competitive elections. Two essential floors include public funding and free or cheap TV; two essential ceilings include caps on spending and soft money.

Public funding. Representative Al Swift, Democrat of Washington, who co-chairs the bipartisan House Task Force, says he's all for public funding. But you'd never know it from talking to him: "There are only three groups against it—incumbents, challengers, and the public." Wrong. The public favors it, according to a Greenberg-Lake poll, by 58 percent to 33 percent. And as a challenger who was outspent $13 million to $2 million in a Senate race, I'm convinced that a system of publicly matched small gifts would make it possible for non-heirs to compete on more equal terms with well-endowed incumbents. With supporters like Swift—and Republican opponents complaining about giving taxpayer money to grubby politicians—no wonder public funding has fallen off the radar.

Enter Senators John Kerry, Bill Bradley, and Joe Biden, who are determined to force the issue in the Senate by proposing a public funding amendment to the leading bill. They should especially push two arguments. First, there's the cost to taxpayers of the existing *private* financing of public elections. The bailout of the Lincoln S&L alone is four times the annual cost of total general election campaign financing. Second, the best real-world argument for public funding is not only the presidential funding process, but also the twelve states and several cities already successfully implementing it.

In New York City, candidates were able to raise up to $100,000 from individual contributors and faced no ceiling on overall expenditures. In the 1985 Democratic primary, for example, Ed Koch outspent his leading opponent ten-to-one. The Campaign Finance Act of 1988 put a stop to this, establishing matching funds for smaller gifts, a $3,000 contribution limit, and a $3.5 million spending limit. The 1989 city elections showed the act to be a success, evening the playing field among contestants and generating bipartisan praise from David Dinkins, Koch, and Rudolph Giuliani.

Still, direct public funding is in neither the central Senate measure, the Boren-Mitchell bill, nor reportedly the current Foley draft. So unless Public Citizen's million-dollar media and grass-roots campaign boosts Kerry's version, the odds are long that our system for electing presidents and mayors will be good enough for members of Congress.

Free or cheaper TV or mail. "Why not . . . require that, near election time, both great parties be allowed, without expense, an equal amount of time on the air, to the end that both sides of all issues be fairly and adequately presented to the people?" The speaker was Frank Knox, the Republican vice presidential nominee in 1936, and he was talking about radio.

Today, TV and radio advertising typically consume half of all campaign expenditures. Candidates become incessant panhandlers in order to enrich private companies for the use of the public airwaves to educate the public in public elections. So Senators John Danforth, Rudman, and Dole, noting that TV ad costs doubled in the past six years, are pushing for subsidized electronic advertising of a kind that is common in Europe. Indeed, of twenty-one democratic countries studied by the American Enterprise Institute, eighteen provided free TV time to political parties (Norway, Sri Lanka, and the United States were the only ones that did not).

The final form can vary greatly: the time could simply be made far cheaper. It could go directly to candidates in thirty- and sixty-second increments, or in five-minute increments with the requirement that only a talking candidate could appear; in TV/radio markets with many congressional districts, such as New York City and Los Angeles, candidates unhappy with wasting 90 percent of their ad time on voters in other districts could convert the electronic value of their time into targeted mail; or candidates able to verify a threshold of small gifts

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could get them matched by public funds and earn a "Candidate Communications Voucher" that could be redeemed at a TV station or the post office.

According to the best calculations, the "opportunity cost" of 120 minutes of general election TV time for House candidates and 210 minutes for Senate candidates would be $200 million. Either stations would absorb this cost as the precondition of a scarce lucrative license ($200 million is under one percent of TV's 1986 ad revenues of more than $22 billion) or it would be paid out of public funds (from an increased check-off on income tax forms of $3).

When President Bush told a group of public interest advocates last June that he opposed public funding of congressional races, Joan Claybrook of Public Citizen asked him, "What about cheaper TV time or mail?" "Oh, that's a possibility," he answered. Of course, subsidized electronic advertising is a form of public funding. But since the money goes directly to voter education, and not a politician's war chest or pocket, Bush, like many key swing Republicans and Democrats, is sympathetic. Odds: perhaps one in three.

A cap on expenditures or PAC gifts. In 1974 Congress put a lid on House spending, but the Supreme Court's 1976 *Buckley* v. *Valeo* decision ruled the $140,000 cap to be an unconstitutional infringement of "speech." In what Senator Mitchell (a former federal judge) called "one of the most weakly reasoned, poorly written, internally contradictory court opinions I've ever read," the six-justice majority reasoned that in politics the right to spend was equal to the right to speak; ergo, limits on spending were limits on speech. We always knew that in politics "money talks," but most non-lawyers thought that was a problem, not a principle.

Justice Byron White, in a dissenting opinion, predicted that "without limits on total expenditures, campaign costs will inevitably and endlessly escalate." Score one for the Whizzer: since the decision, the average cost of winning a Senate seat has increased ten times. If spending keeps doubling, as it did from 1982 to 1988 ($2 million to $4 million), the average cost of a Senate seat would be $16 million by the year 2000.

Under *Buckley*, Congress could still persuade candidates to accept a cap voluntarily in exchange for other benefits, such as public matching funds. But not if Senator Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, has his way. "There is no chance that a bill will become law that contains spending limits," he says, reflecting the view of Ed Rollins, head of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, that Republican challengers should preserve the option of vastly outspending Democratic incumbents. One wonders why. It's hard to think of many examples of when Republican challengers won such races, though it's easy to come up with hundreds of Democratic incumbents who financially buried Republicans. Perhaps the party of privilege just can't let go of its spending habits.

A general expenditure cap would indirectly reduce the problem of PAC contributions with strings attached. There's a PAC cap in the Boren-Mitchell bill of 12 percent of receipts, which would have reduced PAC funds in Senate races in 1988 by two-thirds. With Bush, Dole, Mitchell, and Foley behind some PAC lid, its odds are no worse than even.

Regulating soft money. "Soft money" is non-federal money given to state parties that ends up influencing federal races. There are at least two reasons that *The New York Times* calls this phenomenon "sewer money": Charles Keating Jr. and the '88 presidential election. Although federal law limited Keating to $1,000 individual donations and $25,000 overall, he gave $1.3 million to various candidates, as well as to state parties and voter drives, which in turn spent the funds in ways that allegedly helped federal candidates. Similarly, at the presidential level, although Bush and Dukakis each took $44.5 million checks from the Treasury on the condition that they accept no private funds, their fund-raisers were coaxing $100,000-level donors to give what turned out to be a total of $100 million to state parties, which spent the money to help their respective tickets. This is called a loophole.

Common Cause believes that a campaign finance bill that allowed soft money would be more loophole than law. While Boren-Mitchell would nearly ban such funds, state party chairmen, especially Democrats, are militantly opposed: Texas Democratic chairman Bob Slagle thinks "Mitchell-Boren could be writing the epitaph on the tombstone of state parties all over the country." California's Jerry Brown calls a ban unconstitutional. This conflict between Common Cause and the Democrats is likely to produce a compromise that imposes some ceiling on such gifts (say, $20,000) with full disclosure.

If the current campaign finance system doesn't fall this year, even given partisan obstacles like McConnell and Rollins, it's hard to know when it will. The public wants change. Members are embarrassed that they both have to genuflect for gifts and endure comedic taunts. (Jay Leno: "Did you hear the latest S&L scandal? They wasted millions on extra bonuses, trips, and carpets when they *knew* the money had been earmarked for corrupt senators. Outrageous!") Donors too are getting weary: one major Democratic contributor in New York told me he was astonished when a freshman senator called for help in 1989—"and he was up for re-election in '94!"

Last month in Manhattan five Soviet visitors and several Americans cross-examined each other on the state of each country's democracy—our venerable and imitated yet imperfect one and their new, groping, flawed one. The Soviets expressed shock at how the quantity of money and ads so often seemed to determine the winner in our elections. In Moscow, they pointed out, candidates for Peoples Deputy more equally competed by leafletting, rallying, doorbell ringing, and debating, including at least one debate on television. You have to hope Congress will have more pride than to let our great republic take lessons in campaign fairness from the Soviet Union's toddler of a wannabe democracy. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Bound for Love

It's Almodóvar time. This is no surprise. The young Spanish director, still under forty though he has made eight films, has hit the happiest of mediums in his career: he has done exactly what he wanted to do, and what he wanted to do has been newsworthy. This is not to suggest that he is more hustler than artist. (Was Erik Satie? Alfred Jarry?) But his films certainly rejoice in the fact that his sincerity is scandalous. The notoriety is part of his art. In this country he has had increasing success and attention, and his new film can only increase it further.

If "camp" had not by now become a camp term, it would apply to Pedro Almodóvar. He likes to use kitsch, comic and grave, with the amused tolerance of a visitor from another planet. He is a homosexual who apparently doesn't know what a closet is, and in our society, this non-disguise makes him both a citizen and an alien. He can gush and despise, revel and sneer, as through a bifocal lens. Because his work is almost always honed with wit and splattered with violence, it glistens and threatens. Seeing the best Almodóvar is a bit like being the other person in a knife-throwing act, spread-eagled against the board, hoping that the hail of knives will do no worse than outline one's form.

Paradox, which is part of his method, is also part of his career. Many of his films have had strong homosexual components; but this isn't true of his best work. Homosexuality is a minor element in *What Have I Done to Deserve This?* and is completely absent from the new one—his pinnacle so far—**Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!** (Miramax).

It begins with a slight deception. The first image, over which title and credits are imposed, is a chromo of the Sacred Heart of Mary, so we brace ourselves for another Almodóvar slashing of religion. But the only subsequent references to the subject are two pious chromos, one of them this Sacred Heart, which hang over two beds that are especially busy.

Almodóvar's screenplay (he always writes his own) is based on a familiar idea: a woman is kidnapped by a man and eventually falls in love with him. The first film use of this idea that I recall is *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* (1948), but a closer forebear is *The Collector* (1965), in which a man kidnaps a woman because he is in love with her and wants to keep her prisoner until she falls in love with him. Almodóvar is presumably aware of antecedents and puts his own spin on the ball.

This time his film is not about social criticism but about social outsiders. The kidnapper, played by Antonio Banderas, is a lately released mental patient. (The hospital administrator, a woman, gives him a farewell packet of money in thanks for the pleasures he has given her—also some nurses, though she doesn't know it.) He is an orphan, skilled in many trades, a thief, and had escaped from the hospital several times. On one of those jaunts he had been to bed with a film star. That star, played by Victoria Abril, is the woman he now kidnaps and ties up. (She, with a busy boudoir life, doesn't recall their past meeting.) Her films are porno-horror. And she is a recently detoxed drug addict.

Almodóvar's basic deviltry here is not merely in choosing heterodox characters but in transporting them to the world of romantic comedy. Our sympathy—an odd term to be using about one of his films—goes in time to both of these characters: we like them and want them to end up together. Perhaps Almodóvar's ultimate sardonic triumph is in making us have James Stewart/Jean Arthur feelings about this pair of seasoned, though young, wild ones.

Throughout the film there are wry chuckles: Abril's anti-romantic toothache, for which Banderas has to go out and buy drugs from street dealers; her acceptance, after the second or third binding, of the ropes and gag as her lot in this situation; her complaint about the adhesive tape he uses to gag her and his shopping for a softer tape; the way that, earlier, she amuses herself in the bath. And as usual, Almodóvar reaches his bejeweled hand down into vulgarity, just so that we can see him doing it: a shot of Abril on the toilet and, later, a similar shot of her sister—who is played with comic fizz by Loles León.

But under and above all this decor is the relationship between Banderas and Abril—erotic, comic, ultimately passionate. They begin as assailant and victim. Gradually she is convinced that his aggression grew from love, from a desire to have her with him so that she can fall in love with him. Gradually her resentment alters. When she sees the brutality he suffered in order to get her the drugs she needs for her pain, she heats—and melts. Washing his wounds does it; they bed, in

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Cinema Paradiso. *Full of flavor and enjoyable sentiment. A Sicilian boy grows up in a town where the movie theater is the hub of that small world. (Reviewed 2/19/90)* **The Mahabharata.** *Peter Brook's three-hour film of his nine-hour theater production does even less justice to the Indian classic original, but scene by scene, the large-spirited acting makes it rewarding. (5/7/90)* **Mama, There's a Man in Your Bed.** *The bed belongs to a large black cleaning woman who works in a Paris office. The man is the CEO of the company. Charm and fun. (3/5/90)* **Pretty Woman.** *Julia Roberts shines as a new star in this confection about an LA hooker and a big-time financier, Richard Gere. Pleasantness all the way. (4/16/90)* **—SK**

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one more Almodóvarian linkage of blood and sex.

The long sex scene that follows is, for a change, essential. It's a volcanic outburst of what both, in different ways, have been damming up until now and that explodes, not through roughness but through tenderness. Almodóvar ensures that we get the point: in one of the shots, he multiplies the sex in a many-paneled mirror. (One of the film's sly jokes: Abril remembers Banderas by his lovemaking. Only after their encounter does she recall that they had met before.)

We're told that Carmen Maura, the leading actress of most Almodóvar films, quarreled with him and that he then sought out Abril. Maura is a fine actress in the Irene Papas vein, but Abril is perfect for this part—supple, lovely, poutily sexy, spoiled, a hedonist waiting to be touched to the unique. Imagine Rosanna Arquette with talent. Or Rebecca de Mornay as she is. Banderas is open yet wary, attractive yet simple, fiery yet doglike. The interaction of this pair, adroitly orchestrated by the director, is the film's chief pleasure—something like, though a good deal more resonant than, the interaction in *Pretty Woman*.

The only other performance of note comes from the stalwart Francisco Rabal, familiar from *Viridiana* and *Eclipse*, as Abril's porno-horror director. Another grim Almodóvar joke, another bit of black fringe on his rosy romance: the director is confined to a wheelchair but is, he says, "hornier than ever."

José Luis Alcaine and José Alcedo, the cinematographer and editor who are both Almodóvar veterans, provide color and pace—just sufficiently colorful and sufficiently brisk. Sheerly in cinematic terms, Almodóvar shows more self-confidence. No longer does he use trick shots (for instance, through a pair of glasses lying on the floor) to show how clever he is. He puts his camera where it will be of best service, unobtrusively, to what, he says, drew him to filmmaking in the first place, "the passion of actors."

As a stylist he is unusual among the accomplished because it isn't easy to describe him by visual characteristics. Rather, it's the man himself, behind the film, who registers—light-handed, satirical, insouciant, with a reverse side that's revealingly close to the sentimental. •

Behind the Green Card

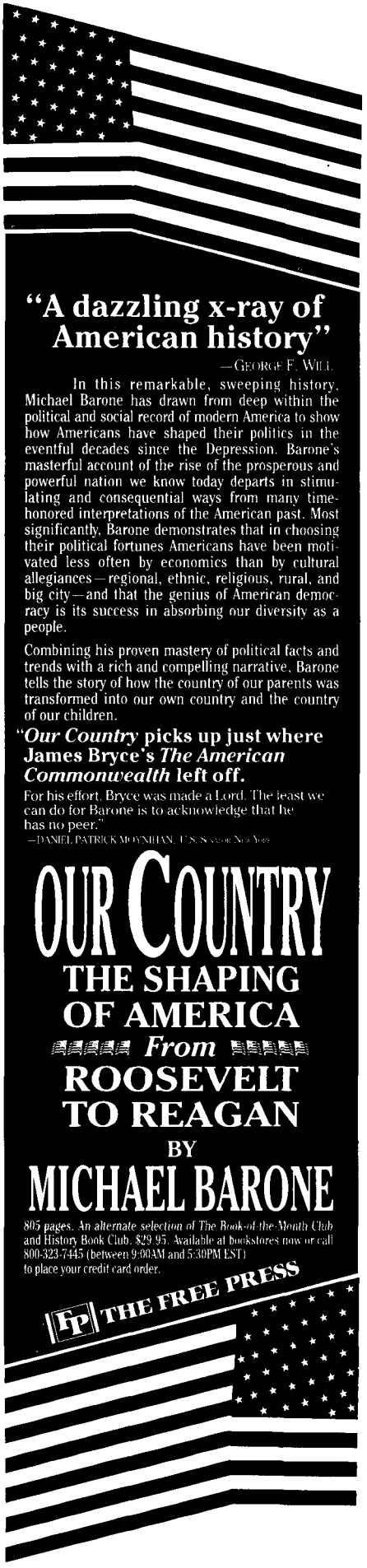
BY JAGDISH BHAGWATI

The Economic Consequences of Immigration
by Julian L. Simon
(Basil Blackwell, 320 pp., $39.95)

Friends or Strangers:
The Impact of Immigrants on the U.S. Economy
by George J. Borjas
(Basic Books, 274 pp., $22.95)

We imported workers and got men instead: so said the Swiss novelist Max Frisch as he contemplated the inability of Western European governments, facing the economic crisis of the 1970s, to return foreign guestworkers to their homes, despite the explicit understanding that the *gastarbeiter* program gave none of them the right to linger. In directly confronting the fate of human beings, immigration policy raises questions that escape easy answers. Should we exclude? How many should we exclude? Whom should we exclude? These questions, about the design of legal immigration quotas, are complex enough and are typically resolved by compromises dictated by economics, ethics, and politics. Except that they aren't really resolved: legal immigration quotas are rarely effective.

Aliens fly, swim, row, and walk in past our patrols and into our underclass. What should we do with the illegals already in our midst? Pursue them with ferocity? Create a climate of fear that prevents their riskless access to our social entitlements, including even the denial of public school to their children, in the hope that this will dull America's glitter and reduce the fevered and furtive inflow? Or should we seek to ease their life instead, no matter their illegal status,


"A dazzling x-ray of American history"
—GEORGE F. WILL
In this remarkable, sweeping history, Michael Barone has drawn from deep within the political and social record of modern America to show how Americans have shaped their politics in the eventful decades since the Depression. Barone's masterful account of the rise of the prosperous and powerful nation we know today departs in stimulating and consequential ways from many time-honored interpretations of the American past. Most significantly, Barone demonstrates that in choosing their political fortunes Americans have been motivated less often by economics than by cultural allegiances—regional, ethnic, religious, rural, and big city—and that the genius of American democracy is its success in absorbing our diversity as a people.
Combining his proven mastery of political facts and trends with a rich and compelling narrative, Barone tells the story of how the country of our parents was transformed into our own country and the country of our children.
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For his effort, Bryce was made a Lord. The least we can do for Barone is to acknowledge that he has no peer."
—DANIEL PATRICK MOYNIHAN, U.S. Senator, New York
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IS THE CURRICULUM BIASED?

A Statement by the National Association of Scholars

American higher education is facing widespread demands to eliminate the allegedly "Eurocentric" and "patriarchal" bias of the curriculum. While the details vary from campus to campus, these demands tend to focus on four objectives:

- *that the "canon" be revised to include more works by blacks, other ethnic minorities, and women;*
- *that "the issues of race, gender, and class" be introduced into a greater variety of courses;*
- *that more courses in women's studies and minority studies be developed;*
- *that courses in women's studies and/or minority studies be required of all undergraduates.*

Various justifications are commonly proffered for making these changes. It is alleged that:

- *works by minorities, women, and Third World authors have been excluded from the curriculum;*
- *minority and female students feel alienated and their educational progress is retarded by being asked to study works primarily by white males;*
- *in order to overcome their own prejudices, white males must become acquainted with the cultures and problems of minorities and with the perspectives and problems of women;*
- *the traditional curriculum represents the hegemony of Western culture, covertly supports a status quo inherently oppressive of women and minorities, and is unfairly imposed on students from different cultures;*
- *the traditional desiderata of truth, objectivity, and critical intelligence can be met only by adding the perspectives of women and minorities and by facing up to the new questions they raise;*
- *an increasingly diverse society and interdependent world require that our citizens gain greater understanding of different cultures.*

The **National Association of Scholars** *disputes* the first five of these arguments and believes that the last entails something other than the changes being proposed.

First, any work, whether formerly neglected or widely known, should be added, retained, or removed from the curriculum on the basis of its conformance to generally applicable intellectual and aesthetic standards. A sound curriculum cannot be built by replacing those standards with the principle of proportional representation of authors, classified ethnically, biologically, or geographically.

Second, the idea that students will be discouraged by not encountering more works by members of their own race, sex, or ethnic group, even were it substantiated, would not justify adding inferior works. Such paternalism conveys a message opposite to the one desired.

Third, other cultures, minority subcultures, and social problems have long been studied in the liberal arts curriculum in such established disciplines as history, literature, comparative religion, economics, political science, anthropology, and sociology. But more important, mere acquaintance with differences does not guarantee tolerance, an ideal Western in origin and fostered by knowledge of what is common to us all.

Fourth, the idea that the traditional curriculum "excludes" the contributions of all but males of European descent is patently false. From their beginnings, Western art and science have drawn upon the achievements of non-Western societies and since have been absorbed and further enriched by peoples around the globe. That the liberal arts oppress minorities and women is yet more ludicrous. Even if the curriculum were confined to thought strictly European in origin, it would still present a rich variety of conflicting ideas, including the very concepts of equality and freedom from oppression invoked by those who would reorient the curriculum.

Fifth, while diversity of background is valuable to the discussion of issues to which those differences are germane, objectivity is in general not enhanced but subverted by the idea that people of different sexes, races, or ethnic backgrounds necessarily see things differently. The assertion that cognition is determined by group membership is itself an example of stereotypic thinking which undermines the possibility of a true community of discourse.

Sixth, the study of the traditions and achievements of other nations and of ethnic subcultures is important and should be encouraged. But this must proceed in a manner that is intellectually honest and does not serve as a pretext for inserting polemics into the curriculum. Furthermore, "multicultural education" should not take place at the expense of studies that transcend cultural differences: the truths of mathematics, the sciences, history, and so on, are not different for people of different races, sexes, or cultures, and for that reason alone their study is liberating. Nor should we further attenuate the study of the traditions of the West. Not only is knowledge of those traditions essential for any evaluation of our own institutions, it is increasingly relevant to our understanding of other nations, which, in striking testament to the universality of the values they embody, are rapidly adapting Western practices to their own situations.

The **National Association of Scholars** is in favor of ethnic studies, the study of non-Western cultures, and the study of the special problems of women and minorities in our society, but it opposes subordinating entire humanities and social science curricula to such studies and it views with alarm their growing politicization. Efforts purportedly made to introduce "other points of view" and "pluralism" often seem in fact designed to restrict attention to a narrow set of issues, tendentiously defined. An examination of many women's studies and minority studies courses and programs discloses little study of other cultures and much excoriation of our society for its alleged oppression of women, blacks, and others. The banner of "cultural diversity" is apparently being raised by some whose paramount interest actually lies in attacking the West and its institutions.

We urge our colleagues to demand clear explanations and cogent arguments in support of the proposals being so rapidly brought before them, and to reject any that cannot be justified. The curriculum is and should be open to change, but we must rebut the false charges being made against existing disciplines. We must also reject the allegations of "racism" and "sexism" that are frequently leveled against honest critics of the new proposals, and which only have the effect of stifling much-needed debate.

Copies of this statement or additional information about the **National Association of Scholars** and its activities, including its Fellows Program, Research Center, Speakers Bureau, state and regional affiliates, conferences, local membership events, executive and faculty search services, and its quarterly *Academic Questions*, may be obtained by writing to the **National Association of Scholars, Suite 250 East, Twenty Nassau Street, Princeton, NJ 08542**, or by calling **609-683-7878**.

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humanely looking the other way since they are already here?

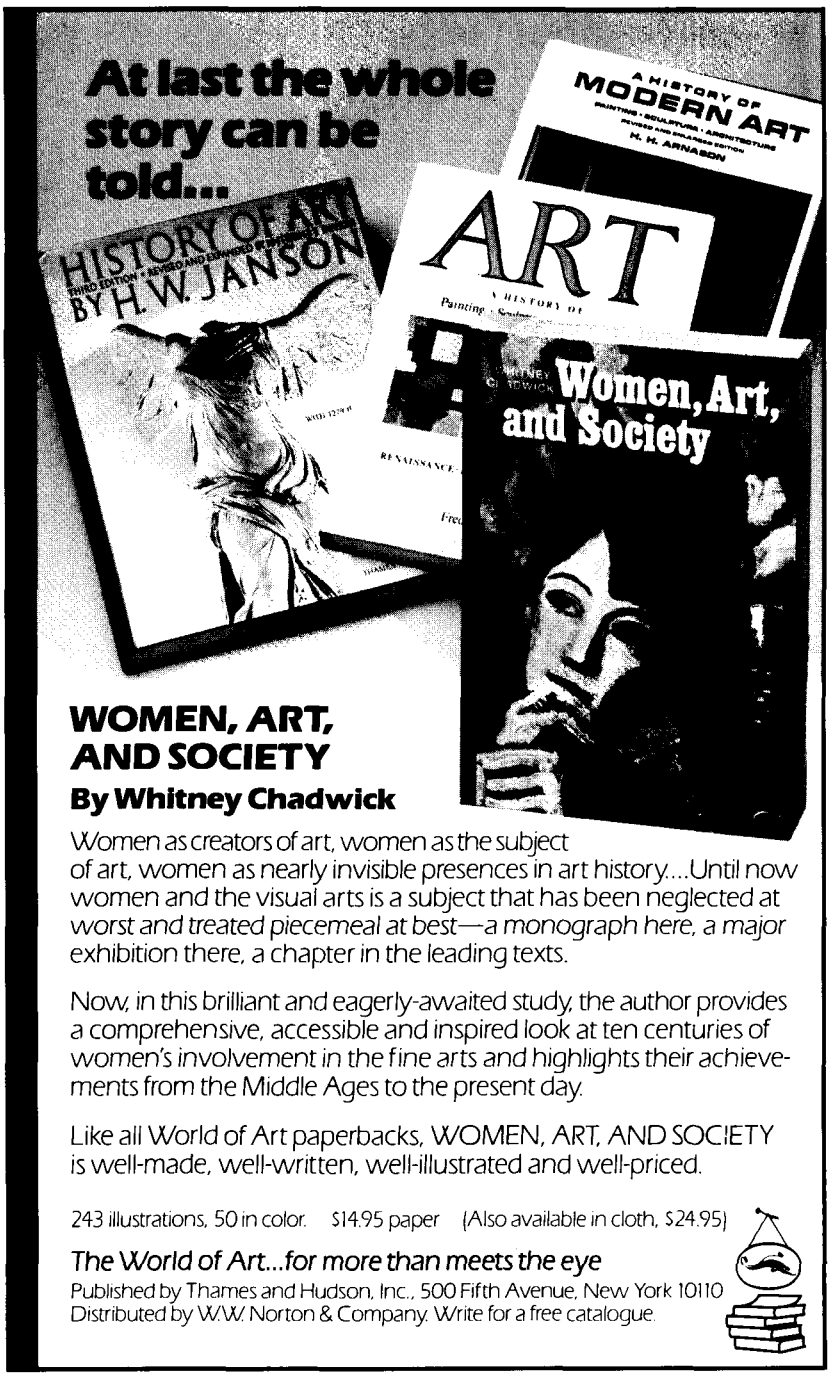
Other aliens land right at our doorstep, to seek first-asylum refuge. They challenge our ethical sensibilities and strain our public purse to the breaking point. Our return of the asylum-seekers to El Salvador and Guatemala led to the sanctuary movement; and Hong Kong's British masters face international outrage as they seek to deny asylum and return the boat people to Vietnam.

For the United States, a country whose history and psyche were defined by the open door of the nineteenth century, the operation of the closed door in the twentieth century has been particularly difficult. Starting with the national embrace of immigration restrictions in 1921, when the first quota limits were established, we have been witness to successive attempts at rewriting legislation, always in anguish, trying to come to terms with changing circumstances and sensibilities as best the political process permits.

The last decade has seen one more such effort, ambitious in scope and complex in architecture. The admission of refugees was settled in the 1980 Refugee Act, which allocated 50,000 visas for "normal flow" refugees and permitted the president, in consultation with Congress, to increase the allocation. Illegal immigrants were addressed in the 1986 Immigration Act; its key features included the amnesty program and the introduction of employer sanctions penalizing the hiring of illegals. Now we are in the process of legislating the admission of all others. This three-layered legislation is designed to define our immigration policy until at least the end of this century. For that reason, a scholarly look at this entire edifice is an urgent necessity, especially since there are excellent reasons to think that it is seriously flawed.

Julian Simon's book should have undertaken this task. It does not. The bulk of it is narrowly targeted, instead, at the critics of liberal immigration policies, seeking to establish that immigrants do us good and that added numbers would do even more. Simon certainly has a keen nose for rubbish. He demolishes many of the farcical, if popular and effective, claims of the anti-immigrationists. His scalpel is particularly sharp when he confronts, with cool logic and cold facts, those who claim that immigrants, whether legal or illegal, are a large net burden on the tax system, taking more in entitlements than they pay in revenues. Where Roger Conner of the Federation for American Immigration Reform argues that "taxpayers are hurt by having to pay more for social services," and Leonard Chapman, then commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), adds that "we spend millions every month supporting people who are not supposed to be here," Simon argues that the data demonstrate otherwise. The immigrants are young and pay more into the Social Security system; they do not have significantly greater unemployment rates, and do not therefore claim differentially higher unemployment benefits; and in any event, the illegals tend to keep their heads in the sand and out of trouble, forgoing benefits that they can claim only at peril. On balance, they bring profit, not loss, to our tax system.

If you were a victim of the alarmist assertions that immigration today is at an all-time high or that illegal immigration is in excess of 10 million, Simon will assure you that you do not know your history, that patient research yields more comforting numbers. Simon can be a formidable foe of foolishness. But not always. Every now and then he buries the rubbish of others under his own. This is partly because economics is a hard taskmaster: you know it well or you pay the price. Simon's turgid technicalities and elementary algebra create an air of scientific rigor, but they do not save him from



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lapses in economic argument when the going gets tough.

Simon argues, for instance, that immigration will be beneficial because a greater population means that "more of everything is produced, which promotes learning by doing." But surely more population need not lead to more production of everything: more babies are born, more diapers are demanded and produced, and the economy then *reduces* the production of shirts for the adults who must care for the babies and cannot afford to buy new shirts as often as before. Then again, as resources get reallocated due to the newborn, production may expand in those activities where the pace of learning by doing is less than in the sectors in which production declines.

But if Simon's economics can be sloppy, his statistical evidence is often cited with disregard for conceptual clarity, to draw conclusions that it cannot support. Thus, in urging that more people mean more prosperity, Simon asserts that the evidence shows larger population leading to higher "productivity." In support of this proposition he cites Hollis Chenery's 1960 study of the manufacturing sector: "All else being equal, if one country is twice as populous as another, output per worker is 20 percent larger. This is a very large positive effect of population size no matter how you look at it." But increased productivity must be properly defined as getting more from the same resources. Such an increase cannot be inferred from an increase in output per worker, which can increase because workers have more equipment to work with. Chenery's findings cannot be used to infer that "true" productivity increases with population.

Similarly, Simon cites Colin Clark's 1967 studies showing that the productivity of American industries relative to Canadian industries rises as their relative production levels rise. For Simon, this means that more "learning by doing" follows from higher production levels; with production assumed in turn to increase with population, immigration is proved to be beneficial to our productivity and hence to us. Yet, disregarding the inadequacy of Clark's productivity indices to the task at hand, the economist will surely wonder whether the causality runs the other way, with greater relative efficiency leading to higher relative production. Econometricians have ways of getting around this "identification problem," but Simon fails to identify it at all. As a consequence, the case for liberal immigration that is based on the benign link between more population and more productivity remains unproven.

Part of the problem is that Simon is so offended by what he castigates as the "bunkum" produced by the anti-immigration lobbies during the long battles over the 1986 legislation, and is so partisan in favor of more immigration (a conviction that he acknowledges and that I share) that he falls prey to the well-known "ballooning up" process. Where analysis and evidence show that the anti-immigrants' claims are not necessarily correct, he tends to conclude that they are necessarily not correct. Or he will occasionally indulge in the logical fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi*, more popularly known as creating a straw man. Thus, to counter the valid claim that many of our immigrants are ill-educated and low-skilled, he argues that they are more educated than the natives on average. This is interesting, but it is not the issue.

Simon's excesses follow also from his politics and his economics. A conservative, he leans toward optimism about the world's failings and pessimism about our ability to fix them. Even when he admits to problems that immigration occasionally causes, such as crowding in the schools, he asserts that in the long run things will wind up being better than they would have been. This optimism may be a useful corrective to the doomsayers, but it badly mars Simon's claims to scientific superiority over his adver-

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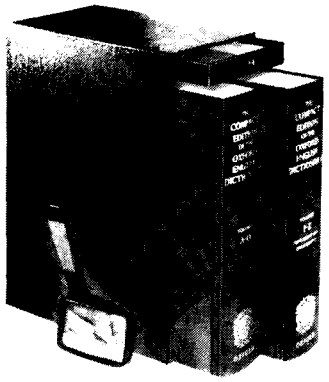

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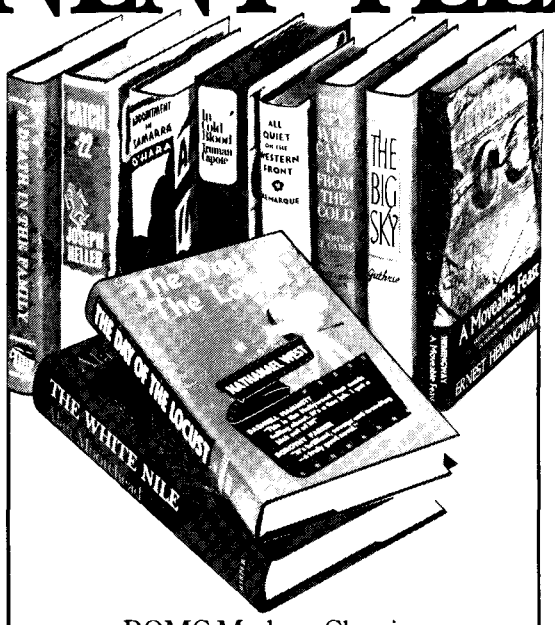

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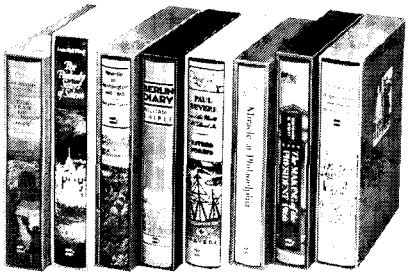

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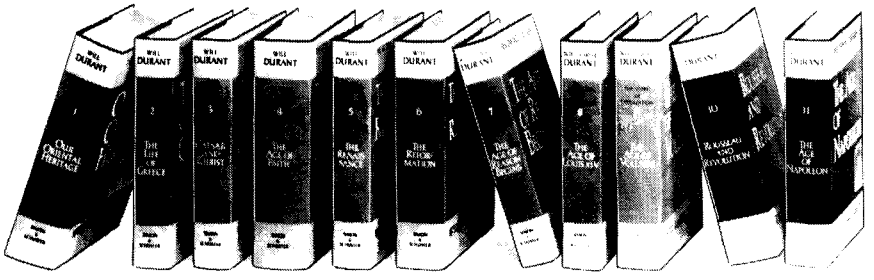

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saries. To take a gross example, he invokes "overlapping empirical studies" to claim the "absence of causal influence of population growth upon economic development," and then goes even further to assert that "in the *very* long run more people [should] have a *positive* net effect" because of the (unproven) productivity effects of more numbers. But a National Research Council expert group of demographers and economists, including those cited by Simon, came to this conclusion in 1986, in their report on "Population Growth and Economic Development": "On balance, we reach the qualitative conclusion that slower population growth would be beneficial to economic development for most developing countries."

If Simon's politics make him Panglossian, his economics makes him indifferent to the distributional consequences of immigration that bother others. Conservative economics tends to ignore distributional issues, concentrating instead on efficiency. Economists' conventional "welfare criterion" for approving a policy change is simply that it should be *possible* to compensate the losers while some gravy remains with the winners. Whether the compensation is actually made is not an issue normally raised by those who use this "potential compensation" criterion in a knee-jerk fashion. Sophisticated economists, by contrast, understand that there is a world of difference, for the losers, between potential compensation and actual compensation. Few would approve of immigration if Simon and I profited from the immigration of domestics, the wages of black domestics fell (or rose less), and we declared this a beneficial event simply because we could compensate the blacks but actually did not. Yet conservative economists are more likely in practice to settle for the potential-compensation approach, arguing that worrying about compensation will hold up efficiency-enhancing changes, and that things will work out well in the wash for everyone.

Simon's review of the empirical analyses of the wage and unemployment effects of immigration cannot really dispose of the argument that specific disadvantaged groups are adversely affected from time to time. Indeed, George Borjas, a prominent empirical researcher on immigration into the United States, concludes in his carefully argued and gracefully written book that a 10 percent increase in the number of immigrants will depress the wages of the foreign-born by at least 2 percent. But Simon's response is, again, optimism about the long run—and, in any event, "where the society responds with restrictive action to the request of every group—even every relatively poor group—which is threatened by imports or immigrants or technological change or change in public tastes, there will be no end to the claimants, and the economy will suffer from drag."

This view really won't do, and not only because of its ethical unattractiveness. It is also politically naive. Pluralist politics is not merely about the size of the pie, but also, even more, about who gets the bigger slice. The adverse distributional impact caused by external phenomena such as immigration and imports cannot be equated with that resulting from internal sources of change; Simon ignores the fact that the revealed social contract suggests a considerably lower level of tolerance by most groups for uncompensated harm imposed on them by the former in the interest of efficiency.

Immigration is manifestly one area where retreat into the potential-compensation option won't work. Simon's failure to see this is also evident, and particularly crippling, in his discussion of the effects of immigration on revenues and expenditures. He barely focuses on the nature of the net gain: the federal government's gain exceeds the local governments' losses. That is precisely where the question of distribution arises again: local communities such as Lowell, Massachusetts, and Miami are worried about the costs of immigrant and refugee influx and the failure of the federal government (the winner, by Simon's calculations) to compensate them, the losers.

Simon's case for liberal immigration, a policy that is fundamentally sound, is thus underargued and overstated. The fearful stereotypes that are used against the immigrants—principally that they create unemployment among us—do not survive his (and Borjas's) scrutiny. Immigrants become productive members of our society, and they do not subtract from our income, leaving distributional effects aside. But the claim that they actually enhance our well-being is another matter altogether. It requires proof that the immigrants put more into the pie than they take for themselves, leaving us with extra icing. Unfortunately, Simon's assertion that there are beneficial productivity effects will carry no conviction except to those already converted. The surprising demonstration that we take more in revenues from the immigrants than they take in entitlements from us is all that firmly supports Simon's optimism; but the magnitudes involved are, at best, not staggeringly large.

Simon's brief, penultimate chapter on immigration reform is disappointing in other ways. Astonishingly, he fails to ground his views firmly in a critical appraisal of the key aspects of the important 1980 and 1986 legislation; the two acts of Congress are not even in the index. Nor does Simon adequately recognize the many important differences among legal, illegal, and refugee admissions. He does not recognize, for instance, that illegals raise unique economic, ethical, and social issues because many of them enter the underclass, whereas legally admitted aliens do not. As for refugees, Simon thinks of them essentially in terms of their productivity vis-à-vis other migrants. He recommends that they be treated identically, and that, when they are not productive, we take the productive ones and bribe other nations into accepting the unproductive ones; this, he thinks, would mean the accommodation of more refugees in the world.

This is bad economics. We must compare potential immigrants' productivity not just in the United States but also elsewhere, if an "optimal" economic allocation is to be made. But it is bad ethics, too. Can we really assign refugees this way, altogether regardless of their feelings and aspirations? Would we send the Vietnamese boat refugees in Hong Kong to China simply because China will accept them from us at a price? Would we really be able to take in no refugees at all, as Simon suggests, getting other countries to "buy" them from us, when we pride ourselves on having an immigration policy based more on refugee and familial criteria and not on the purely

Pretending You Were Joseph

You could consider your seven fat losses.
You could ponder the long lean years left.

You could count the rest of your exiled life
not double-crossed but an Egyptian-style feast

to be ceremoniously eaten. Too soon past.
You could discover that in any parched season

siblings, nearly forgotten and foreign, might knock
for the food of forgiveness. You could ask:

"In a famine of mercy must everyone fast?"

Sybil Estess

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who-is-best-for-our-needs criterion that underlay the Western European *gastarbeiter* system?

The science of economic policy concerns the search for maximizing or satisficing solutions subject to constraints, but those constraints are provided not merely by resources and know-how, as the elementary economics textbooks teach, but also by ethics, culture, history, and politics. In fact, the truly difficult issues that we face in immigration policy are not narrowly economic at all. The questions raised by illegal immigration and by first-asylum refugees go to the heart of the matter, and to our hearts. The 1986 act, designed to deal with illegals, and the 1980 act, addressed to refugees, are not adequate to the problems we confront. The former was wrongly premised and has become an irrelevance; its fate was predictable. The latter has been overtaken by the sudden emergence of first-asylum refugees; its inadequacy could not have been readily anticipated. But it's worth starting with a look at the current state of debate about legal immigration, before turning to illegals and refugees.

Legal immigration. How are any given quotas to be assigned among different claimants? This question is currently being debated in Congress. American policy since 1965 has overwhelmingly favored admissions on family criteria. Of the 270,000 numerically limited legal admissions in 1988, nearly 90 percent were assigned to the familial categories, First to Fifth Preference. Indeed, since 1978, 95 percent of all non-refugee legal immigrants have been admitted under such criteria. Is such a policy "fair"? Is it economically the most rewarding for us?

Some think that the policy is unfair because it is "nepotistic." The ethnic groups that do not profit from it, such as the Irish, object strenuously (and effectively through the good offices of Senators Kennedy and Moynihan), especially to the Fifth Preference for "brothers and sisters" of U.S. citizens, with its quota of 64,800 in 1988. The defense of "nepotism" comes, on the other hand, from Italians and Indians, who evidently have an abundance of siblings at the gates of our consulates in Rome and New Delhi. Fairness, in sum, is in the mind of the beholder; and conflicting views of it are resolved by the relative strength of the different pressure groups that play the political game.

For economists such as Simon and Borjas, however, the key problem with the family-reunification system is that it does not maximize the attendant import of skills, and hence the benefit to the United States from immigration. Simon simply assumes this when he argues, oddly, that "independent persons selected on economic grounds would be preferable to relatives, were there to be no humanitarian considerations. This change is unlikely, however, so no further consideration will be given to the matter." Borjas, by contrast, makes this a central issue in his work, arguing that the skill level of immigration has actually declined with the massive shift in 1965 to the family-reunification system. Presumably, the familial system has shifted the source of immigration to developing countries that send immigrants with lower educational levels than the earlier immigrants from the Western developed nations.

Borjas's evidence is mainly indirect, based on the fact that earnings estimates of the entering "foreign born" from census data show a decline. But earnings and skills are not the same thing. Nor do the data permit an explicit linkage between the category of the immigrant visa and the earning profiles: the thesis does not necessarily hold, for instance, for spouses who enter under the Second Preference from India. The reason lies in economics. There is an active "market" in India for potential spouses for holders of American green cards and citizens of Indian origin. The latter, because of the potentially large pool of candidates, can choose spouses who are educated and skilled enough to yield high economic returns to the family.

Moreover, the criticism that the familial system produces significant deterioration in the skill levels of immigrants entering the United States, as opposed to a skills-based system of the kind that both Simon and Borjas seem to favor, is particularly doubtful if we consider also that such skills-based systems are hard to fine-tune successfully (as shown by the Canadian "points" system of immigration, which grades applicants on a scale of zero to 100, requiring a minimum of fifty, and awarding extra points for education, age, and initiative). But then, if a skills-based system will not necessarily produce a truly substantial increase in skills for the United States, and if family values are important to us, then should economists, worrying only about the economic efficiency of immigration, encourage all the current fuss in Congress against the familial system?

Illegal immigration. A worldwide phenomenon today, illegal immigration is truly substantial for the United States. It comes largely from Mexico, though it now appears, based on the 1980 census and other evidence, that Mexican illegals amounted to not much more than half of the illegals here in the early 1980s. The influx from Mexico is the product of the economics of vast disparity in opportunity between the two countries, the fortuitous circumstance of a long border, and the morality that makes us unable to sustain drastic, draconian measures to enforce sanctions. Many cross the Rio Grande firm in the belief that Porfirio Diaz got it exactly wrong when he said: "Poor Mexico, how far from God and how near the United States."

We intercept abundantly. But all we do is send the Mexicans back; and they cross the Rio Grande again, and again, until they strike pay dirt in getting past the INS. We do not construct Berlin Walls, we do not shoot gleefully at the people violating our borders. And we cannot expect that internal enforcement against those who get past the border can be successful in a civilized society. Attempts to cut off the demand for illegal labor by enacting employer sanctions to penalize those who hire illegal aliens, as in our 1986 Immigration Control and Reform Act, have been generally unsuccessful wherever they have been adopted, even in such "no-nonsense" societies as Germany and Switzerland. Judges have been lenient; it is hard to come down heavily when the crime is the employment of impoverished aliens and the punishment could mean their deprivation and their destitution. And in the United States, we have had yet another civil rights complication. Faced with the prospect of discrimination against look-alike citizens and legal aliens, our legislation has often emasculated employer sanctions, reducing their bite even before they could haul offending employers to lenient courts.

There are more constraints. We cannot contemplate making enough investment in Mexico, or granting it sufficient aid, to make enough of a dent in Mexican misery to roll back the numbers seeking entry to the north. If anything, limited improvements, which is all we can hope for, could enable more Mexicans to finance the journey, and may paradoxically increase the illegal influx and compound the problem.

Given the fetters on policy-making that derive from ethics, and the paradoxes that derive from economics, we have no option except to regard as infeasible the goal of reducing illegal immigration to negligible levels. Since illegals will remain in our midst, and more will keep coming, the only meaningful, and indeed compelling, question for us becomes a moral one: How do we treat these illegal aliens with decency,

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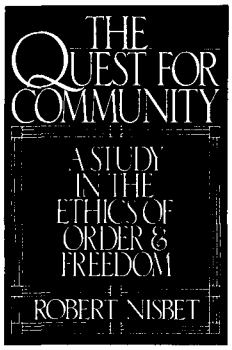

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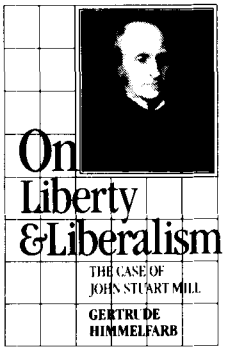

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assuring them and their families the civil rights that would rescue them from the afflictions of their illegal status? In my view, the answer has to take us in the direction of less internal enforcement, more protected and effective access by the illegals to our welfare programs, and equal rights (e.g., to education and health) for the children of illegals as for the children of legal aliens and citizens. These are solutions that contrast sharply with Simon's quick and conventional prescription to get tough on illegals' access to welfare services.

The 1986 legislation failed to get to this redefinition of our policy because it proceeded from the entirely false premise that illegal immigration could be eliminated. It offered amnesty to the backlog of aliens already here. To shut off new inflows, it created employer sanctions, while promising a mild increase in border enforcement. It was apparent, though not to many on the 1978 Select Commission on Immigration and Refugee Policy (which was split on the issue of employer sanctions as on many others) or to the architects of the 1986 act, that neither measure could succeed in its objectives. Now we know who was right. A few more than 2 million have benefited from the amnesty, while a quarter of a million are expected to get legalized under the SAW (Special Agricultural Workers) Program. Large numbers, in other words, almost certainly languish in their illegal status, if Borjas's cautious estimate of 3 million to 4 million in 1980 is accepted. The illegal flows continue. The INS apprehended 1.6 million illegals at the border in (fiscal year) 1986; in 1988 the numbers were still running close to a million.

First-asylum refugees. The drafters of the 1980 Refugee Act imagined that we would continue to enjoy the luxury of deciding mainly on the admission requests of refugees situated *elsewhere*, distributing our quotas to those we favored and denying them to others with little fuss, and even less guilt since they were distant, their sorrows beyond our consciousness and our conscience. The problems that countries of first asylum face—how to handle refugees already in their midst, how to make the morally unsettling decisions (to deport them, to offer them the protection of our international-legal obligations without opening the door to all claims), how to handle sudden and large inflows—were matters that we simply did not think through.

In fact, the 1980 act did not even specify how asylum claims were to be handled; the matter was left to the attorney general. All that we had done, starting with our accession to the 1967 Protocol, an international treaty adhered to by nearly a hundred countries, was to accept the procedure of *refoulement*, or return of a refugee, that a civilized nation should follow in treating first-asylum refugees. In particular, we would have to forgo the *refoulement* to territories where his life or his freedom would be threatened. In the practice of those principles, however, problems soon arose.

We have now had three "crises" with first-asylum refugees. The Haitian "boat refugees," who started to arrive in late 1972 and increased in numbers in the late 1970s, were the first wave to attract retribution from the INS. Then, beginning in 1980, came the refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala. And in late 1988 a resurgence of Central American refugees occurred, principally from Nicaragua and El Salvador. Our response included such novel enforcements as taking aliens off domestic flights and joint combing operations with Mexicans (whose firm objections to collaboration directed at Mexican illegals crossing the Rio Grande contrast with their complicity in targeting the unfortunate Central Americans).

In each instance, the INS reacted with actions that offend our ethical traditions and violate the spirit, if not the letter, of the principles on asylum that we have embraced. In each instance, men and women of conscience objected, recalling us to our moral principles and providing much of the countervailing force that has constrained the INS from continued and further excesses. Our treatment of the Haitians illustrates this only too well. It was truly scandalous. James Silk of the U.S. Committee for Refugees records the existence of a 1978 INS "Haitian Program" under which "asylum claims were prejudged, various techniques were used to keep Haitians from gaining legal counsel, and hearings were speeded up and simultaneously scheduled, making it impossible for the few available lawyers to appear at all of them." (Judge James Lawrence King stopped this program in July 1980.)

Reversing the earlier policy of releasing most arriving aliens, the INS then started detaining all Haitian arrivals in South Florida, placing many in Camp Krome and others in federal detention facilities. This policy of detention was later extended to all arrivals, discrimination against Haitians being held legally untenable. The incarceration meant real hardship: separation of families (since men and women were typically divided), restraints put on contacts with relatives outside, obstacles to contacting lawyers

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who could help process asylum claims with an INS keen to see them denied—some of the many ways in which our procedures violated the spirit of Protocol 31, which bars any penalties on asylum-seekers and binds us not to restrict their movement unnecessarily.

And that is not the worst part of the treatment of the refugees by the INS. In the Haitian case, we went a step further. Knowing full well that incarcerations and the denial of due process to the Haitians (admittedly not their right under our Constitution, which nonetheless affords some protections to aliens not legally accepted by us) would lead to protests and undercut support for these methods, the Reagan administration proceeded to interdict the Haitian boats at sea. While official noises were made about ensuring *nonrefoulement*, and the agreement of President Duvalier was obtained that no returned Haitian would be prosecuted (though unauthorized exit from Haiti was legally a crime), one would have to be morally defective to pretend that *refoulement*, with retribution in Haiti, did not occur. The problem of dealing with Haitian first-asylum claimants was to be solved by interdiction, away from our eyes and our outrage, by the return of the Haitians to the tender mercies of the Tontons Macoute.

We could persist in these policies for so long because there was no sizable Haitian community in the United States and no powerful lobby to plead their cause, until public-interest groups began to agitate on their behalf. But why did we beat up on these defenseless boat people in the first place? The reason has to do with panic.

The American panic is owed partly to the large size of illegal immigration lately, and to the illusion, as Simon beautifully demonstrates, that it has been vastly larger than it actually is. Frustrated by the long and porous border to the south, the INS, with the administration not far behind, has tended to pick on anyone else they can, putting a finger in any hole they can find in the dike. Thus, we have been going after foreign students seeking admission here, getting our consuls to read their minds and to decide, arbitrarily and without due process, and without even bothering to justify their actions to the applicants, that a visa must be denied because the student is "likely to immigrate." Meritorious but poor students have been denied entry, on the empirically nonsensical and morally offensive assumption that they are more likely to stay on than dumb but rich students. Their misfortune is simply that we can seize on them and keep them out. We poked our finger in the Haitians' eyes for much the same reason: they were within the reach of our power. And the American panic also reflects the fear that, if the Haitians, and now the Central Americans, were treated more humanely, we would be sending "the wrong message," and countless numbers would come. Fear has big eyes, goes the Russian proverb.

The panic must be met not by the methods of the INS, but by respect for our traditions and our obligations, by adhering to genuinely fair-minded procedures to evaluate the asylum claims. Brutality and cutting corners are unworthy of a nation that lives by the rule of law and respect for human rights, both virtues that we properly urge on others. And the notion that toughness will deter substantial numbers from seeking entry into the United States is arguably false. Even if we were to intern them all, and then deny them all asylum applications, violating all canons of decency and some canons of international law, should we not expect many of these same people, fleeing war and devastation in Central America, simply to join the masses that cross the Rio Grande illegally? We would only have diverted the inflow into another channel.

If we cannot bring ourselves to offer asylum to many of these people, moreover, let us at least meet their needs by offering them temporary safe haven until normal conditions return to their homelands, as now in Nicaragua. Vastly poorer countries than us have done this for much larger numbers: India for nearly 10 million refugees from East Pakistan, Pakistan for almost half as many refugees from Afghanistan. An acknowledgment of our moral obligation, and its codification in legislation, are called for.

If our current policies toward illegals and refugees were thus recast, there surely would be some increase in the number of aliens who get in. And there would surely be some reduction in the net benefit to our revenues as we treat illegals better. But neither is a cause for alarm. The real problem is distributional. We need, in particular, more generous compensatory assistance to the communities that must bear the financial brunt of larger alien inflows. As Simon shows, Washington is the winner in revenues from immigration, and it should find the funds to finance the losers. This is not too much to ask, when the consonance of our policies with our values is at stake.

JAGDISH BHAGWATI is the Arthur Lehman Professor of Economics and Professor of Political Science at Columbia University. His *Immigration: Economics, Ethics and Politics* is forthcoming from MIT Press.

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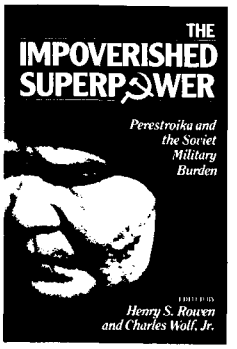

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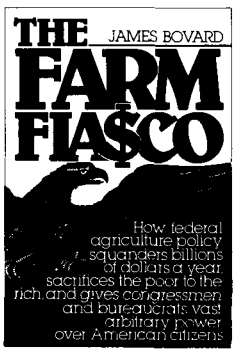
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The Visible and the Invisible

BY DENIS DONOGHUE

In the Western Night: Collected Poems, 1965-90 by Frank Bidart

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 244 pp., $19.95)

This book brings together Frank Bidart's three volumes of poetry, *Golden State* (1973), *The Book of the Body* (1977), and *The Sacrifice* (1983), and adds to them six recent, fairly short poems and a long one, "The First Hour of the Night," a dream or vision of the history of philosophy. It is good to have the work assembled in one handsome volume. Some readers may feel that the order of the poems is peculiar: the new short poems first, then the three earlier volumes in reverse order of publication, and then the conclusion, "The First Hour of the Night." It is a quirky arrangement, surrounding earlier work with new poems, short and long, and it has some odd consequences. "Confessional," a poem about Bidart's mother, is a second attempt to do justice to the subject, the first being "Elegy" in *The Book of the Body*; but we come upon the second shot before we have seen the first one.

Readers are generally gratified to see "development" in a poet; they like to construe a body of poetry in narrative terms, which provide a trajectory of perception and wisdom. Perhaps the merit of the ordering of *In the Western Night* is that it asks the reader to take a synchronic view of the work, and not to bother about development. Bidart evidently thinks that his most recent work is his best. Perhaps it would depress a poet to think otherwise. But the question of development may not be the prime issue, in Bidart's special case; it may be better to see this poetry as a constellation in which the relation between one poem and another is spatial, rather than temporal or sequential. The two poems about his mother would be taken as two glimpses of the subject, not as proof that on the second occasion he got her right, or put right his relation to her.

In the lore of the 1960s, Frank Bidart is associated with Robert Lowell, whom he met, at Harvard I assume, in 1966. He was soon a member of Lowell's cenacle. The two became great friends, and Bidart gave Lowell invaluable help in editing *Notebook* (1967-68), *The Dolphin* (1973), *For Lizzie and Harriet* (1973), and *History* (1973). Ian Hamilton's biography of Lowell indicates that Bidart was endlessly generous and responsive to Lowell through difficult years. Not that Bidart, as a poet, was Lowell's ephebe. He was a poet before he met Lowell, and his style was already formed.

I am sure that Lowell's *Life Studies* (1959) was a crucial book for Bidart, as it was for thousands of his contemporaries, but I don't find any evidence that those poems deflected him from his purpose. The poet of "California Plush," a poem about Bidart's father, knew what he was about, and that his direction differed from Lowell's. Bidart's common style, as in that poem, is easygoing narrative; fluent but unassertive, the tone is trusting and trustworthy:

> It was in Bishop, the
> room was done
> in California plush: we had gone into the
> coffee shop, were told
> you could only get a steak in the bar:
> I hesitated,
> not wanting to be an occasion of
> temptation for my father
>
> but he wanted to, so we entered
>
> a dark room, with amber water glasses,
> walnut
> tables, captain's chairs,
> plastic doilies, papier-mâché bas-relief
> wall ballerinas,

Not much sign of Lowell there.

"California Plush" is a very early poem, but it shows that Bidart had found his own voice by listening carefully to the diverse voices of Pound, Eliot, Yeats, Frost, and others, and trusting his talent not to be annihilated. As a student, Bidart had the advantage of having the philosopher Philip Wheelwright and the literary scholar Thomas Edwards as his teachers at Riverside. Wheelwright's *The Burning Fountain* (1954) shows the range and quality of his concerns: symbolism, rite, myth, imagination, ethics, metaphor, Aristotle, Heraclitus, Aeschylus, Eliot. Edwards, a superb scholar-critic of eighteenth-century English literature, teaches his students what it means to pay

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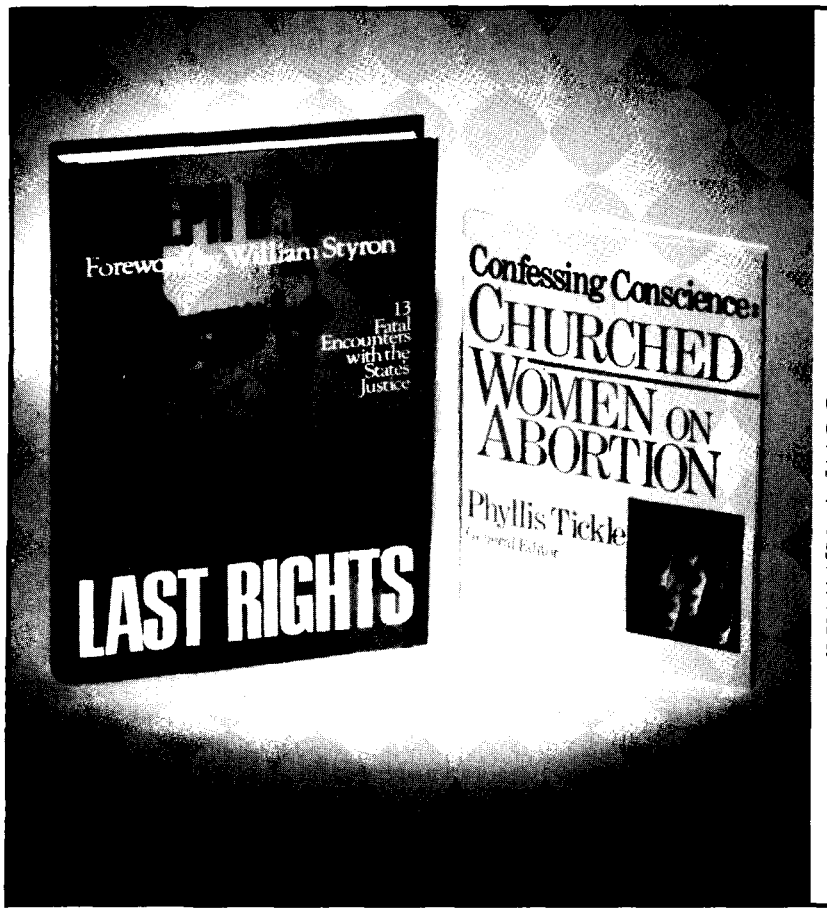
attention, whether to Pope's *Dunciad*, or to a novel by Wodehouse, or to late-night TV. It was a genuine education, for Bidart. He recalls, in an interview reprinted in the new book, that at Riverside he read Trilling's *The Liberal Imagination*, Burke's *A Grammar of Motives*, Fergusson's *The Idea of a Theater*. He was evidently willing to learn from the masters of criticism as well as from the masters of poetry.

Shortly after Lowell's death, Bidart published an essay on his friend's life and work in which he quoted, almost without comment or application, two passages: the first a line from one of Van Gogh's letters, the second a remark of Valéry about Mallarmé. Van Gogh: "The man who refuses to love what he loves dooms himself." Valéry: "Near him while he was still alive, I thought of his destiny as already realized." If we bring the two statements together, removing them from their application to Lowell, we make a motto for Bidart's poetry, or at least for large parts of it.

Many of these poems are about the effort to face up to the obligation of loving what—or rather, whom—one loves, and to accept that obligation as one's destiny. As Bidart says in "Guilty of Dust," "WHAT YOU LOVE IS YOUR FATE." Some of the most moving and disturbing poems in *In the Western Night* are recognitions, painfully achieved, of the fate of having a certain man as father, a certain woman as mother, and other people as provocations to baffled infatuation.

Several of Bidart's most urgent poems are, in some sense that is hard to describe, mystical. I'm not aware that the study of "the Mystic Way" has gone much beyond Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, which distinguished, in 1911, between the surface self and the transcendental self, and described mysticism as an activity of the transcendental self, a science of ultimates. The Mystic Way leads its adepts toward an experience of the Absolute, or God; and along the way, sensory impressions come to seem apparitions from a more real world of essential life. The experiences to which the geniuses of spiritual life testify are indeed extraordinary, though it seems blasphemous to me to claim, as Underhill does, that in those experiences the Absolute, or God, has been attained. It is hard to say, in any event, precisely what bearing the classical traditions of mysticism have upon Bidart's poems. I can't call them religious poems, because religion entails theology, belief, and doctrine. Still, his poems transcend any psychological description known to me. Some readers may find these mystical poems weird, and turn skeptical against Bidart's claim of access to secret places, unheard harmonies, ineffable states of being. That the states alluded to, or worked for, are spiritually genuine, I do not doubt; but I could only proffer them by repeating Bidart's own words, as in "Dark Night" and "To the Dead."

Two other kinds of poetry inhabit *In the Western Night*: poems largely if not in every detail autobiographical, and poems mainly dramatic. There is a continuity between the kinds. In the autobiographical poems, Bidart puts himself through the discipline of imagining again the lives that, at the time, seemed mainly to thwart his own. In the dramatic poems, while the most arduous work is to imagine a life completely removed from his own, he has also to recognize that the separation cannot be absolute. Reading the autobiographical poems, I kept recalling a comment of Gadamer's on the relations between history, tradition, and subjectivity—that long before we understand ourselves by self-reflection, we understand ourselves "in a self-evident way in the family, society, and country in which we live." As Gadamer says, "history does



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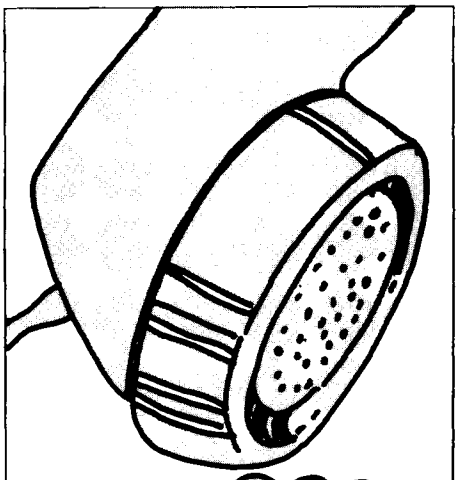

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not belong to us, but we belong to it." The self-awareness of the individual is only "a flickering in the closed circuits of historical life." In recalling this historicity, I may be only resisting the ineffability of Bidart's mystical strain, or reaching for an account of history that might domesticate it. In truth, it can't be domesticated.

In his dramatic poems, Bidart goes far out of his way to find lives other than his own. One of his most powerful poems, "Ellen West," imagines the life and the death of a woman, one of Ludwig Binswanger's patients, a victim of depressive schizophrenia. The material of the poem is derived from Binswanger's essay, "Der Fall Ellen West," which was written in 1944, in which he describes her "desperate defiance in wishing to be herself, but as a different being from the one into which she had actually been thrown from the ground of her existence." Bidart has invented only the letter that Ellen West wrote, just before she poisoned herself, to a woman she had come to know in the hospital:

> You and, yes, my husband,—
> you and he
>
> have by degrees drawn me within the circle;
> forced me to sit down at last on the ground.
>
> I am grateful.
>
> But something in me *refuses* it.
>
> —How eager I have been
> to compromise, to kill this *refuser*,—
>
> but each compromise, each attempt
> to poison an ideal
> which often seemed to *me* sterile and unreal,
>
> heightens my hunger.
>
> I am crippled. I disappoint you.

In "The War of Vaslav Nijinsky," also a long poem, Bidart takes passages from the biography of Nijinsky by his wife, Romola, and from other more disinterested sources. Recalling his choreographing of *Le Sacre du Printemps*, Nijinsky is made to say of the girl chosen to die:

> *SHE LEAPS*
>
> *BECAUSE SHE HATES THE GROUND.*
>
> But then, slowly, as others
> join in she finds that there is a self
>
> WITHIN herself
>
> that is *NOT* HERSELF
>
> impelling her to accept,—and at last
> to *LEAD*,—
>
> THE DANCE
>
> that is her own sacrifice . . .

The obliquity of all these poems—and "The First Hour of the Night," for which Wilhelm Dilthey's essay "The Dream" is the main source, and "The Arc," which is written in the voice of a man who has lost an arm—testifies to Bidart's respect, to put it as mildly as that, for other lives. Their themes include love, thought, forgiveness, mother, father, the war in Vietnam, the death of a dog, the last years of Maria Callas, a child's discovery that he wants his father to die. There are allusions to John of the Cross, Horace, Catullus, Augustine, Virgil, Hegel, all the big philosophers.

I hope it is not vulgar on my part to think that these dramatic poems, and especially the poems about Ellen West and Nijinsky, are Bidart's own attempts to escape from mystical or quasi-mystical states, to find relief from the lure of transcending sensory experience. I know nothing of the Mystic Way. I am reluctant even to think about it. But surely the great mystics often find their spiritual capacity an affliction, even while they hunger and thirst for its revelations. If that is true, it must sometimes be an immense relief for anyone of a mystical disposition to convince himself that other people exist, to imagine what it would be to be different, to gain access to those lives.

It is clear from these poems, and it emerges from the interview in this book, that Bidart's master is Pound. In the interview, he speaks of Pound's "ideogrammic method," his juxtaposition of images and motifs, "allowing 'meaning' to arise from the juxtapositions," his method of "allowing *anything* into the poem without changing its identity." It's not as simple as it sounds, as Bidart knows. Besides, while he has learned much from Pound, Bidart has to deal with his own problem as a poet trying "to embody the mind moving *through* the elements of its world, actively contending with and organizing them, while they somehow retain the illusion of their independence and nature." It is an ethical issue: how to pay attention to something without feeling that you are doing it a favor, all the while knowing that you *are* doing it a favor, since you could have ignored it.

Bidart's way of ensuring that the objects to which he pays attention retain at least the illusion of independence is to hover over them, often repeating their names as if they were mantras, as in "Dark Night":

> In a dark night, when the light
> burning was the burning of love
> *(fortuitous*
> *night, fated, free,*—)

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as I stole from my dark house, dark
house that was silent, grave, sleeping,—

Or he holds on to the word, changing its disposition from noun to adjective: "the burning in my burning heart."

But Bidart has another procedure, which puts this one at risk, by which the word that denotes the object of attention is required to move beyond that duty, and to project the speaker's mind toward some other state of being. He is ready to acknowledge the indissoluble character of the object, but he has his own spirituality, too, to reckon with, so he can't linger upon the object so lovingly as to subdue himself entirely or to thwart his destiny. In "Another Life" someone says:

"—In a dream I never *exactly* dreamed,
but that is, somehow, the quintessence
of what I *might* have dreamed,
Kennedy is in Paris

again; it's '61; . . ."

Here the scruple attendant upon getting the experience right is in a desperate hurry to get from existence through essence to quintessence. The italicized words anxiously ensure that we don't think we're in the indicative, or even comfortably in the subjunctive, mood.

Much of this work in Bidart's poems is done by prepositions. Grammarians tell us that a preposition is "an indeclinable word or particle serving to mark the relation between two notional words, the latter one being usually a substantive or pronoun." The function of a preposition is not only to indicate a relation between the two words, but to stabilize both in that relation for the time being. In Bidart's poems, however, prepositions are more often than not given the job of enforcing a relation between a noun and some deeper intimation of the object or the state that it apparently denotes.

I'm thinking of his way of using such prepositions as "within" and "beneath." In "To the Dead," he writes: "There is a NIGHT within the NIGHT." And again, "CORRIDORS within WALLS," "that is the HOUSE within the HOUSE. . . ." In "The First Hour of the Night," "within" is printed in slanted rather than perpendicular block capitals:

in the relationship between the
impenetrable, immeasurable
UNIVERSE that lies *WITHIN* as well as
beyond us

and is later normalized in a context of such frantic typography that it doesn't seem to have safely returned to base:

(—this '*tradition*' that I cannot
THINK MY LIFE

without, nor POSSESS IT within—;)

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As for "beneath": in "Book of Night" we read of "THE WORLD THAT IS BENEATH THE WORLD," and in "To the Dead" of "(the disenthralling, necessary, dreamed structure / beneath the structure we see,)." There is also, among the hard-working prepositions, "beyond," as in "Confessional":

> if suddenly the cacophony
> of earth and sea and air
>
> were SILENT, and the voice of the self
> died to the self, and so the self
>
> found its way beyond the self,—
>
> beyond the SELF it has made,—

In those last two lines, as generally in *In the Western Night*, Bidart's concern to show "the mind moving *through* the elements of his world" makes him force "beyond" and "self" to be more ductile than they're in the habit of being. Indeed, any word that finds itself in Bidart's poetry has to be ready to go through unusual exercises.

The look of these poems on the page of *In the Western Night* calls for a comment. In the interview, Bidart refers to "the importance of 'voice' and 'tone of voice' " in his Riverside classes in poetry. And no wonder: his teacher Thomas Edwards was a student of Reuben Brower at Harvard, and Brower was much devoted to Robert Frost's poetry, to the poetic tradition in which voice, idiom, and tone are critical factors. In the interview, Bidart quotes one of Frost's famous statements about "tone of voice":

> A dramatic necessity goes deep into the nature of the sentence. Sentences are not different enough to hold the attention unless they are dramatic. No ingenuity of varying structure will do. All that can save them is the speaking tone of voice somehow entangled in the words and fastened to the page for the ear of the imagination. That is all that can save poetry from the sing-song, all that can save prose from itself.

But the interviewer failed to ask Bidart the obvious question: How comes it, then, that Frost manages to fasten the speaking tone of voice to the page without resorting to the violent typographical forms you seem to find necessary?

It's a reasonable question. Some passages in Bidart's poems keep the reader on a continuous red alert: facing italics, block capitals slanted or perpendicular, dashes with or without commas, parentheses, minatory spacing, scare quotation marks, exclamation marks. "The War of Vaslav Nijinsky" enforces choreographic nicety upon statements that even the demented Nijinsky must have spoken fairly casually:

> I know people's faults
>
> *because in my soul,*
> *I HAVE COMMITTED THEM.*

In other poems it's hard to be sure whether the typographic admonitions are meant to reflect favorably on the speaker—his prosodic scrupulousness, his ethical exactitude, and so on—or to indicate that he has gone beyond the decent limit of precision and rushed into decadence. How am I supposed to read this passage from "Confessional," in which a man, in a session with his confessor, talks about his childhood and his early relation to his mother?

> —I assure you, though I was a "*little boy*,"
> I could be far more charming,
> sympathetic,
> full of sensibility, "*various*," far more
> an understanding and feeling
> ear for my mother's emotions, needs,
> SOUL
>
> than any man, any man she met,—
>
> I know I *wanted* to be: WANTED
> to be the center, the focus of her life . . .

It must be frustrating for Bidart to have to deal with print. No matter what help he gets from the printer, he soon reaches the limit of what he can do with "wanted." The possibilities are exhausted, as far as I can tell, by wanted, *wanted*, WANTED, "wanted," "*wanted*," "WANTED," and the addition of an exclamation mark to any of these. It's like playing a piano with most of the keys missing.

Does it matter? It matters to Bidart, who evidently thinks that the fastening of a speaking tone of voice to the page requires even more of the resources of print than Frost, Williams, and Moore used. (Cummings is another matter.) I'm not sure, mainly because I don't know what the acoustic difference is supposed to be between wanted and WANTED. Is it a matter of volume, sonority, pitch, timbre? It's a bit odd to have to follow not only Frank Bidart but Ellen West, too, in these transactions of print, to have her say:

> —My doctors tell me I must give up
> this ideal;
> but I
> WILL NOT . . . cannot.

Perhaps I'm making too much fuss. Everything that Bidart says about his prosody indicates that for him, as for any poet, prosody, tone of voice, and subject matter are inextricable. If you speak about one of these rather than the others, you mean to advert to the whole, for the moment, in that aspect or under that jurisdiction; that's all. In some of Bidart's poems, however, the typographic arrangements seem to me finical, their

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punctilio hardly worthwhile. The page makes me nervous. Perhaps my nervousness is precisely (or imprecisely) the experience that Bidart wants me to have. His typography is hermetic, but so is the mystical experience.

In the supreme poems, however, Bidart's spiritual force makes me forget the look and yield to the authority of the voice. "Ellen West" is still my favorite poem, a heart-breaking act of sympathy. I keep coming back to the page on which I half-think that Ellen is going to say of her husband, "He married me, and thought I was a wife." But she doesn't. Listen to what she really says:

> Only to my husband I'm not simply a "case."
>
> But he is a fool. He married meat, and thought it was a wife.

DENIS DONOGHUE holds the Henry James Chair of English and American Letters at New York University. *Warrenpoint*, his memoir of growing up in Northern Ireland, will be published by Knopf in the fall.

The Last Stalinist

BY ROBERT TUCKER

Memoirs by Andrei Gromyko translated by Harold Shukman

(Doubleday, 400 pp., $24.95)

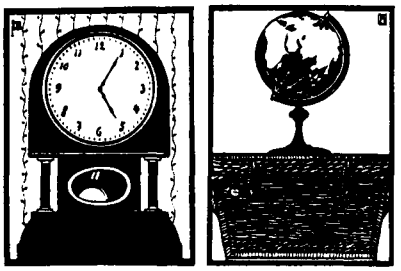
Andrei Andreevich Gromyko, the longtime Soviet foreign minister who died last year at the age of eighty, was perfectly representative of the Stalinist stratum in the Soviet Union. His memoirs—a selection in English of two volumes begun in 1979 and published in Moscow in 1988—show that Gromyko was one of those who remained, to the end, a diplomat of the Stalin school; the book is defensive of Stalin's foreign policy, and should be read cautiously, with that in mind. Gromyko was among the multitude of men of humble peasant or worker origins who were promoted in the 1930s to posts vacated by members of the older Communist elite, which Stalin was destroying in his Great Purge. Some of the new bureaucrats were men of ability, Gromyko included. The one quality they all shared was loyalty to Stalin. They were reliable implementers and mouthpieces of the dictator's policies.

Born in the Belorussian village of Old Gromyki, all of whose families took Gromyko as their name, he became a political activist early in life. At fourteen he was secretary of the village Komsomol cell, at twenty-two he joined the Communist Party in time to take part in collectivizing the local peasantry. One would not know from his reminiscences of that episode in his life that the primary force behind collectivization was terror, or that it was accompanied by the worst famine in Russia's famine-filled history.

The energetic young activist received Party encouragement in his educational career. From Minsk, where he entered postgraduate study in economics, Gromyko and others were transferred in 1934 to the Institute of Economics in Moscow. He became academic secretary of this institution in 1938. (Much later in life he received a doctorate of economics for *The Export of Capital*, and a sequel to it, *The Expansion of the Dollar*, both published under a pseudonym, since the author was by then in the diplomatic service.) Because he specialized in the American economy, Gromyko studied English, which determined his further fate.

In early 1939 he was called to the Party Central Committee for an interview with a commission headed by Viacheslav Molotov and Georgi Malenkov. They assigned him to head the American section of the Foreign Affairs Commissariat. Later that year the young careerist was called to the Kremlin to meet Stalin, who informed him that he was being made second in command in the Soviet Embassy in Washington. Stalin listed the areas of U.S.-Soviet relations to which Gromyko should pay special attention, observing that "the Soviet Union ought to maintain reasonable relations with such a powerful country as the United States." He also advised Gromyko to improve his English by listening to sermons in Washington's churches on Sundays, which Gromyko diplomatically refrained from doing once he was here.

There is no indication at this point in



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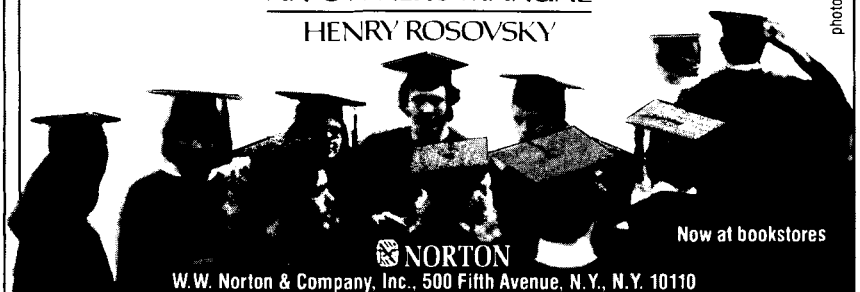

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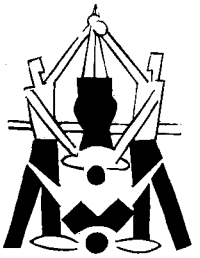

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his memoir that the then thirty-year-old Gromyko was aware—as he certainly was—of the link between his swift advancement and the tragedies that befell a host of Soviet diplomats in the later 1930s. The extreme severity of the purge of the Foreign Commissariat was due partly to Stalin's desire to clear out all the associates of Foreign Commissar Maxim Litvinov (himself replaced by Molotov in May 1939), who would be repelled by the Stalin-Hitler accord of August 1939 and by its secret protocol partitioning eastern Europe between the two dictators. About the "alleged secret protocol," we read in Gromyko's book that "the Soviet chief prosecutor at Nuremberg labeled it a forgery, and correctly so, since no such 'protocol' has ever been found, either in the U.S.S.R. or in any other country—nor could it be." Unfortunately for this last-ditch defense of Stalin, a commission chaired by Politburo member Aleksandr Yakovlev concluded in late 1989 that the protocol really existed, and condemned it.

Had Gromyko lived through 1989, he might have read in *Izvestia* on December 29 of the unveiling of a memorial plaque by the door of the present Soviet Foreign Ministry on Smolensk Square in Moscow. Next to the plaque is a memorial book containing the names of 140 diplomats who fell victim to "the undeclared war that Stalin waged against his own people." The plaque, *Izvestia* went on, "is a symbol of the dashed hopes, lost faith, and shattered destinies of people torn away from life forever by the cold stroke of the butcher's pen." Such was the setting—as Gromyko could not have helped knowing at the time, though here he covers up the fact—of his meteoric diplomatic career.

After Germany invaded Russia in June 1941 and declared war on America in December, Stalin sent Litvinov (who had been living in isolation since his dismissal) to be wartime ambassador to Washington, where he was well received. But Litvinov's ambassadorship ended soon after he clashed in private with Molotov, during the latter's visit to Washington in June 1942. In a conversation that Gromyko overheard, Molotov assailed and Litvinov defended the prewar diplomacy of Britain and France. Stalin, whom Molotov must have briefed on the incident, withdrew Litvinov in 1943, and so Gromyko became, at thirty-five, ambassador to the United States.

As ambassador, Gromyko was included in Stalin's entourage at the wartime Big Three conferences in Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam, and his account of them

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offers a series of close-ups of the dictator. At Tehran, as Gromyko tells it, Stalin provoked Churchill into disclosing the planned date for opening the second front in Europe by threatening to break up the meeting and head for home if he wasn't told. At Yalta, Gromyko describes being called into a backroom by Stalin, who directed him to translate a letter just received from Roosevelt. On learning the news that the government of the United States recognized the right of the Soviet Union to the southern part of Sakhalin Island and the Kuriles, Stalin was greatly pleased: here was proof that the president was willing to pay territorially (at Japan's expense) for Soviet participation in the war in the Pacific after the victory in Europe. Suddenly, he shot a question at Gromyko: "Tell me, what do you think of Roosevelt? Is he clever?" Gromyko remembers replying that Roosevelt was "a highly intelligent, very capable man. Just the fact that he got himself elected president for a third and then a fourth term speaks for itself. Of course, he was helped by the international situation. And a lot of it was also due to the capable job the Democrats did in popularizing his name. But his talks on the radio, his 'fireside chats,' also made a big impact on millions of Americans." To this Stalin replied: "That was smart of him. Yes, he got everything right." And at Potsdam, where the conference was to take place in the nearby Cecilienhof Palace, which once housed German kings, Czar Joseph looked the place over and commented: "Humm, nothing much. A modest palace. Russian czars built themselves something much more solid!"

Evidently valued by Stalin for his knowledge and his dependability, Gromyko rose higher. He took part in creating the United Nations at the Dumbarton Oaks conference in 1944 and at the founding conference in San Francisco in 1945. In 1946 he became the first Soviet permanent representative to the U.N. Soon afterward he received the rank of deputy Soviet foreign minister, and in 1948 he returned to Moscow in that capacity to take up duties in the Foreign Ministry. Now he was, to quote the title of one of his book's chapters, "At the Front in the Cold War."

Although Gromyko finished his memoirs in retirement (having served as Soviet foreign minister from 1957 to 1985, and then as nominal Soviet president for a time), and although a radical rethinking of the Stalin era was under way in the Soviet Union during the later stages of his writing, he remained throughout a stubborn diplomat of the Stalin school in his account of the cold war and its origin. The cold war, as he presents it, was the product of postwar aggressive moves by the Western powers, chiefly the United States, and Stalin's actions and policies were blameless.

ANDREI GROMYKO BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

This places him in an awkward position at times. An appendix to this book gives the transcript of a conversation in the Kremlin in January 1989 between Gromyko, then still president, and Henry Kissinger, who had many dealings with him during his own tenure in high office. Kissinger put a historical question: Why did Stalin risk war by imposing a blockade of Berlin in 1948? Gromyko parried by saying that Stalin took that step knowing that the Americans would not respond with nuclear war, and that he could take care of any response by conventional arms. Kissinger, curiously, did not come back with the obvious follow-up: Whatever Stalin's estimate of the risks of war, why did he make an aggressive move that greatly intensified East-West tensions? He thus allowed Gromyko to wriggle out of one more tight situation, as he had done many times before in colloquy with other Western figures, and to do so in a manner that Stalin would have approved.

Just how thoroughly Gromyko the memoirist remains in thrall to Gromyko the diplomat is clear from his account of an action of Stalin's in June 1950, when the Korean War (here called "America's aggression against the Korean people") began. We may recall that in response to news of the North Korean invasion of South Korea, President Truman decided to send American forces to shore up the South, and the South, along with the American government, appealed to the U.N. for support. How should Moscow respond? When Stalin phoned Gromyko to ask his opinion, the deputy foreign minister proposed that the Soviet U.N. representative, Yakov Malik, be instructed to rebuff the charges of North Korean aggression and to veto the American resolution. Stalin disagreed and personally dictated an instruction to Malik to absent himself from the Security Council's discussion of the issue. Declaring that his advice to Stalin had been correct (the Soviet boycott of the session resulted in Security Council support of the American resolution and ensuing action in Korea), Gromyko says: "On this occasion, Stalin, guided for once by emotion, had not made the best decision."

Perhaps it was not the best decision for Stalin, in hindsight. But Gromyko acts as though he is oblivious to Stalin's rationale for it. There is no reason to think that Stalin was in this instance guided by emotion, or that Gromyko really thought he was. The facts, as recounted by Khrushchev in his memoirs, are that the Moscow-installed North Korean leader Kim Il Sung came to Moscow

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in late 1949 and secured Stalin's permission for an invasion of South Korea. His argument to Stalin, according to Khrushchev, who was privy to the talks, was that "the first poke would touch off an internal explosion in South Korea," that is, that the war would be a quick one. Thus Kim Il Sung dangled before Stalin the alluring prospect of a successful armed coup against an outpost of American influence in Asia, and Stalin took the bait. Khrushchev remembers a dinner at Stalin's dacha at which Kim Il Sung "stressed the many attractive things about South Korea—the good soil and excellent climate for growing rice, the prosperous fishing industry, and so on." And so "we wished every success to Kim Il Sung." Khrushchev also writes that the North Koreans received all needed arms supplies for the operation, that Soviet air force planes were stationed in North Korea to shield Pyongyang from attack, and that China's Mao Zedong fully concurred in the desirability of the project.

The reasoning behind Stalin's instruction to Malik is transparent. If the North Korean offensive, as Stalin had been led (mistakenly) to believe, was going to be a short, successful one, why incur the obloquy of most of the world by unnecessarily vetoing a U.N. resolution of support for beleaguered South Korea, particularly if that veto would only heighten foreign suspicions that the operation in Korea was a Soviet war by proxy? The mystery is not Stalin's reasoning in 1950; the mystery is Gromyko's reasoning in later years. It is all but impossible to believe that Gromyko had no inkling in 1949-50 of Kim Il Sung's visit and the plans stemming from it, or that he remained unaware in later years of Khrushchev's memoirs and their account of the origin of the Korean War. In judging his old mentor to have been guided "by emotion" into not making "the best decision," Gromyko was simply reverting to his poker-faced self as a Stalinist diplomat. And this last-ditch demonstration of loyalty to a Stalinist misrepresentation of the cold war compelled him, paradoxically, to say something slightly—and misleadingly—critical of Stalin himself.

Gromyko's memories of relations between Stalin and Mao show that the two had little use for one another. When Stalin hosted a dinner for Mao and his associates at the Metropole Hotel in Moscow in February 1950, to celebrate the conclusion of a thirty-year treaty between the two governments, Gromyko and others noticed that Stalin and Mao exchanged no more than a few words between long pauses. Later Gromyko saw Stalin explode with anger in private after Mao backed away from a plan to set up Soviet-Chinese joint-stock companies for oil and metal—one of Stalin's favorite mechanisms for controlling client states. Gromyko remembers being horrified when he was in Peking as Soviet foreign minister in 1958 and heard Mao say that if, in that time of high Sino-American tension, America should attack China with nuclear weapons, the Chinese armies would retreat deep into the interior, where they would grip the American forces in a pincer, after which the Soviet Union should "give them everything you've got," that is, destroy them with nuclear weapons. In 1959 Mao hosted an official dinner for Khrushchev, Gromyko, and others during which he said no more than a dozen words to his chief guest. And after all this Gromyko says about Mao, "If one disregarded his theoretical aims, philosophical concepts, and peculiar view on politics, he was on the whole a nice man, and courteous too."

Shortly before he died on July 2, 1989, Gromyko completed an additional chapter of his book for the English-language edition. "More about Stalin," it is called. More, indeed. By this time the Gorbachev administration's anti-Stalin outlook was abundantly clear; and in keeping with it Gromyko spoke up at long last in condemnation of Stalin. "Looking back now, it all seems like a fantasy. But sadly it was reality, and the country had to live through it."

Suddenly memories appear for which the reader has looked in vain in the earlier chapters of the book. For instance: "We students watched with aching hearts as thousands of horses and carts carrying men, women, and children rumbled through the environs of Minsk, Borisov, and Vitebsk on their way to the north and further away from the Ukraine. . . . Many of these farmers died along the way." And:

> I remember the oppressive circumstances in Moscow during the period from 1934 to 1939. . . . It was well known that every night the NKVD were "taking" people, as we then said. They were taking them in towns and in the countryside, on the street and in their homes. Those who were "taken" simply disappeared and, as a rule, nothing would be heard of them again. Grown-ups tried to hide the truth from their children, but that couldn't go on for long.

When the academic secretary of Gromyko's Institute of Economics was arrested and he was installed in that man's position, Gromyko feared a similar fate.

Nor did high station in later life bring a sense of personal immunity from arrest. After being recalled to Moscow in 1948 as deputy foreign minister, Gromyko and his wife set off by train for a short rest in

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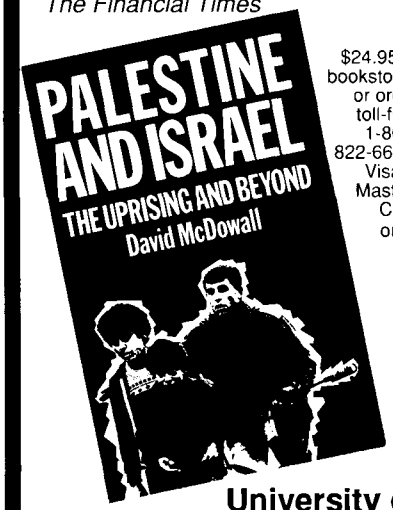

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Sochi. Late at night their train stopped in Tula. There the local Party secretary and his deputy entered the Gromykos' compartment with the message that Molotov had phoned to say that Stalin wanted Gromyko to return to Moscow for a consultation. Mrs. Gromyko was terrified. "After all," the memoirist now remarks, "this was a time when people were being arrested constantly, and this was not the first wave of arrests either." As it turned out, Stalin needed Gromyko's advice on an instruction that was to be sent to the Soviet representative on the U.N. Security Council.

Not even Politburo members felt safe in those years. Stalin had no real friends, Gromyko says, and even his sycophantic security chief Beria was "nothing more than his faithful cur." Constantly suspicious of a possible conspiracy, Stalin discouraged Politburo members from socializing outside his presence. For the same reason, two or more Politburo members never rode in the same car. "They all knew how one careless step or unguarded conversation might end." The wife of Mikhail Kalinin, nominal Soviet president and Politburo member, was imprisoned in the Far East in those years: "Her punishment was meant as a sign to Kalinin." Molotov's Jewish wife, Polina Zhemchuzhina, was arrested in 1952, and was not returned to Moscow until after Stalin's death in 1953. Such was the life of the terrorized entourage that, some Western Sovietologists used to believe, was in sovereign control of policy in those years. The Politburo *was* Stalin.

"More about Stalin" has something of the character of a deathbed confession. It is a jumbled mixture of personal reminiscences of Stalin's system of terror and various questions and thoughts about the causes of it. This epilogue is valuable because, for all its limitations, it comes across as a document of truth. Still, even here, as the shadows gathered before his passage into the night, Gromyko remained the Stalin loyalist in one crucial respect. His lips stayed sealed on the story of Stalin the empire-builder and cold warrior in the postwar years when he, Gromyko, worked in Moscow and watched him at work making foreign policy.

Gromyko, it seems clear, faced a dilemma. He could admit, finally, that Stalin was a terroristic despot inside the country. But because of his whole outlook and temperament, shaped over a lifetime of diplomacy, he could not bring himself to recognize the inescapable corollary: that Stalin's murderous despotism in internal affairs could not fail to find expression in foreign affairs, especially in the years of the cold war. Some of Gromyko's compatriots, however, are not so handicapped. Viacheslav Dashichev, a prominent Soviet historian of foreign policy, made the connection in a long article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in 1988:

> Supercentralization in internal policy inevitably breeds hegemonism and great-power ways in foreign policy. An indicative example is the excommunication of Yugoslavia in 1948 from the system of socialism and the charges brought against its leaders because they refused to bow to Stalin and carry out his orders. . . . The hegemonic, great-power ambition of Stalinism, embedded in foreign policy, repeatedly jeopardized the political balance between states, especially of East and West.

For Gromyko to recognize the truth of such reasoning would have required him to recognize the need to revise in a very fundamental way his chapters about the cold war. This Stalinist was incapable of that revision.

ROBERT TUCKER's *Stalin in Power: The Revolution from Above, 1928-1941* will be published this fall by W. W. Norton.

In Praise of Accidents

BY MARY JO SALTER

Friend of My Youth by Alice Munro

(Knopf, 273 pp., $18.95)

Choosing a favorite among Alice Munro's stories is no easy task, but for me one of them would be "Accident," from *The Moons of Jupiter*, her collection published in 1983. Frances is a music teacher at the high school where her married lover, Ted, teaches science. They are groping stark naked in Ted's supply room when the school secretary (who, like most people in the Ontario town of Hanratty, knows about the affair but has politely, up until now, kept that knowledge from the lovers themselves) bangs on the door to tell Ted that his son, Bobby, has died in a car accident.

The lovers soon learn that Bobby has not died—though he will, some hours later—and while they wait in separate places for news, Ted realizes that he has an opportunity to make a superstitious bargain with God: save Bobby, and I'll give up Frances. But Ted, an atheist (or, you might say, a believer in Accident), rejects his own superstition even before Bobby dies, and vows to keep Frances regardless. He even refuses his son a church service, in a selfish rebellion against his wife's family. Nor does he seem terribly sorry for his wife when, in the aftermath of their only son's death, she finally learns about Frances. In fact, in a sudden, cold, thorough upheaval of his life, Ted proposes to Frances, and she accepts—but not before understanding that Ted is not what she hoped he was, and that she never knew much about him or wanted to, apart from sex.

In themselves these events would make quite a story. Instead, cut to thirty years later (a common, but unpredictably varied, Munro device). We are at the funeral of Adelaide, a sadistically pious character who would not be out of place in a Flannery O'Connor story, and who on the day of the accident had asked Frances, as if out of innocent curiosity, whether she thought God was "paying back for" the affair.

Well, Adelaide is now "paid back" for her bad manners and her morbidity, the reader might ungenerously reflect. That's one reason Munro locates us at Adelaide's funeral. Another is to bring Frances back to Hanratty, which she and Ted had left on their marriage, so that she may re-encounter the blameless man whose car had been the vehicle, so to speak, of her life's transformation. "If he had not gone out in the snow that day to take a baby carriage across town," Frances thinks (and note the tactfully unelaborated symbol of the baby carriage), she

> would not live in Ottawa now, she would not have her two children, she would not have her life, not the same life. That is true. She is sure of it, but it is too ugly to think about. The angle from which she has to see that can never be admitted to; it would seem monstrous.

Here, again, is a chilling potential conclusion to the story. Another writer as skilled and honest and knowing as Munro—and there cannot be many—might

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well have wrapped it up at this moment. But then a peculiar phrase pops into her character's head:

> *What difference*, thinks Frances. She doesn't know where that thought comes from or what it means, for of course there is a difference, anybody can see that, a life's difference. She's had her love, her scandal, her man, her children . . .

But it doesn't matter. Not only because she is still "the same Frances," as she uncomfortably realizes, but because people don't matter. For all the intensity of their relations (which Munro conveys early on with the sexy scramble in the supply room), for all the grief a child's death should occasion, and the disgust we may feel in seeing a parent not deepened by that death but merely deflected to another course, people are not terribly distinctive or important; and we all end up, like Bobby and Adelaide, in a casket.

This is a vision of life customarily reserved for poets, with their penchant for looking down on humanity from a great and generalizing height. But in the heart of the best fiction writer, who is more keen on telling stories about people than on displaying narrative or descriptive technique, has to be a belief that people are unique; that a story about Frances in particular, say, is worth telling. What moves and unnerves me each time I look at "Accident" is the simultaneous impression Munro gives that we are all both irreplaceable and dispensable. The story's title in a single word offers a further paradox: every link in the plot's chain derives from the accident, but an accident is, after all, only random.

Another of Munro's most distinguished stories, "Miles City, Montana" (from her 1986 collection *The Progress of Love*), also concerns the accidental death of a child. The unnamed woman narrator frames her tale with a childhood memory of the drowning of a neglected boy, Steve Gauley. The main story (also a memory) now begins: the narrator, her priggish but somewhat loved husband, Andrew, and their two young daughters, Cynthia and Meg, are on a car trip from Vancouver to Ontario. The mother loves the "shedding" of her domestic life; at home, besieged by neighbors and the telephone, she has wanted "to hide so that I could get busy at my real work, which was" (and here we might fill in something useful, something respectful toward an otherwise unfulfilled female character, like "graphic design"; but Munro continues) "a sort of wooing of distant parts of myself." We know precisely, are delighted and pained by, what she means: How often does life allow us this wooing?

She goes on:

> I could be talking to Andrew, talking to the children and looking at whatever they wanted me to look at—a pig on a sign, a pony in a field, a Volkswagen on a revolving stand—and pouring lemonade into plastic cups, and all the time these bits and pieces would be flying together inside me. The essential composition would be achieved. This made me hopeful and lighthearted. It was being a watcher that did it. A watcher, not a keeper.

In a few pages, it is this mother's very joy in being a watcher, not a keeper that will nearly kill her child. Having stopped to allow the children a swim in a lifeguarded pool (but the lifeguard is kissing her boyfriend at the critical moment), the narrator is absently eyeing a popsicle stick gummed to her heel, philosophizing about the "singleness and precise location" of objects, when it occurs to her: "*Where are the children?*" Three-year-old Meg, that single, singular object, is located at the bottom of the pool; and by a miracle, she is fished out and returned just in time to life.

But the "accident," in the largest sense, isn't over: these parents will again fail their children. Earlier, the narrator's general account of her marital arguments (which might be continuing to this very day, as far as we knew) had concluded with this all-inclusive, single-sentence, lacerating paragraph: "I haven't seen Andrew for years, don't know if he is still thin, has gone completely gray, insists on lettuce, tells the truth, or is hearty and disappointed." And one day, when the children who have so trustingly returned to the back seat of the car achieve some distance from their parents—parents who wanted to believe themselves more attentive than poor Steve Gauley's—they will have to learn to forgive "whatever was flippant, arbitrary, careless, callous—all our natural, and particular, mistakes."

Not surprisingly, and yet with unforeseeable twists, more revelations about accidents occur in Munro's new collection, *Friend of My Youth*. In the marvelously wide and deep "Oh, What Avails," a three-part story spanning decades in the lives of Joan (who will derail a successful marriage for a mostly happy series of affairs) and her brother Morris (who loses the use of an eye at age four, when he steps on a rake), both protagonists are half-blind, agreeable victims of external chance and their own internal limitations.

That's partly the legacy of their cheerful, feckless mother, who never even thought to take the unfortunate boy to an eye specialist: "Couldn't she have gone

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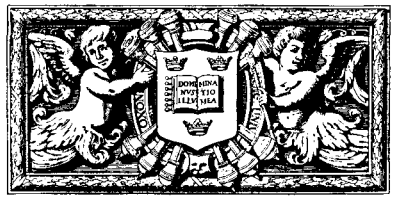

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to the Lions Club and asked them to help her, as they sometimes did help poor people in an emergency? No. No, she couldn't," Munro amusingly offers, by way of something just short of an explanation. Every problem in this beautifully plotted story falls short of solution—a technique suited to carry the mature Joan's intimations of mortality:

> [She] is aware of a new danger, a threat that she could not have imagined when she was younger. . . . And it's hard to describe. The threat is of a change, but it's not the sort of change one has been warned about. It's just this—that suddenly, without warning, Joan is apt to think: *Rubble.* Rubble. You can look down a street, and you can see the shadows, the light, the brick walls . . .—you can see all these things in their temporary separateness, all connected underneath in such a troubling, satisfying, necessary, indescribable way. Or you can see rubble. Passing states, a useless variety of passing states. Rubble.

No conscious-seeming "style" adorns these sentences. Indeed, if ever there was a writer whose sentences both ornate and plain are essentially invisible, each a well-washed window through which we may see life as she does, it is Munro. Those who do want to remind themselves of the windowpane of style between writer and reader might consider how that unlovely word "rubble" is repeated enough times that the sound alone acquires an intended meaninglessness.

Munro shouldn't be mistaken for an absurdist, however; the discourse on rubble doesn't end where I have lopped it off. A new paragraph begins with hope, however feeble or possibly ill-fated: "Joan wants to keep this idea of rubble at bay. She pays attention now to all the ways in which people seem to do that." In another story here, "Differently," the randomness and rubble of life are themselves a source of hope for Georgia, who after remembering the marriage she smashed up and the friendship she allowed to die is grateful for a transcendent moment of forgetfulness, an "accidental clarity."

But the most haunting lines in "Differently" appear earlier, where Georgia wonders whether her sons keep pictures of her ex-husband in their homes. "Perhaps they put the pictures away when she comes to visit," she thinks. "Perhaps they think of protecting these images from one who did him hurt." Or, Munro invites us to speculate, they think of shielding the malefactor herself. Protectiveness isn't lavished on the innocent only; we want also to shield the guilty from too piercing a recollection of their crimes. And why? Perhaps as insurance against guilt for our own crimes, committed in the past or waiting in the future. Munro doesn't say; she respects our intelligence, our right to sift on our own the cruel world she shows us.

Cruel and bizarre things do happen in this book, as in all of Munro's collections; and although that staple of modern fiction, sexual betrayal, crops up repeatedly, its power to surprise us is in itself unexpected. Munro's stories often strike us, like life itself, as "stranger than fiction"—that's why we trust them. In the title story, the member of an obscure and punitive religious sect gets his fiancée's sister pregnant and marries her instead; years later he passes over the long-suffering former fiancée again to marry another woman—his dead wife's hateful, tarty nurse. In "Five Points," an Eastern European girl, ugly and fat, pays all the boys in town for sex, until she has emptied the till of her parents' store and they are forced in shame and financial ruin to close it. The not particularly passionate wife in "Oranges and Apples," whose cynicism is "automatic and irritating," takes up her worshipful, jealous husband's tacit invitation to sleep with the friend he found spying on her with binoculars.

There's a tonal harshness, too, which we welcome: the immediate revisions and reappraisals by which Munro strips away illusions that she had at first offered us. In "Friend of My Youth," for example—a many-tiered story about deceit, punishment, forgiveness, death, romantic love, and the love of parents and children—the narrator, remembering her mother, writes:

> I felt a great fog of platitudes and pieties lurking, an incontestable crippled-mother power, which could capture and choke me. There would be no end to it. I had to keep myself sharp-tongued and cynical, arguing and deflating. Eventually I gave up even that recognition and opposed her in silence.
>
> This is a fancy way of saying that I was no comfort and poor company to her when she had almost nowhere else to turn.

That final sentence is heart-breaking, but it represents, however bitterly, an attempt to laugh. A similar, if lighter, mixture occurs in "Differently," where Georgia's friend has an affair with a man who deserts her in a hotel, after which "she developed frightful chest pains, appropriate to a broken heart. What she really had was a gall-bladder attack." Ever accommodating, her husband comes to take her to the hospital, and then on vacation in Mexico! Or in "Goodness and Mercy," where a daughter escorts her fatally ill mother on a cruise to Europe and then to the hospital in Edinburgh; after all her solicitude, her nearly continuous attendance by land and sea, she is not there when her mother dies but "a couple of blocks away, eating a baked potato from a takeout shop." That the daughter is rather plump, not very much in need of a baked potato, makes the moment more maddening and poignant and, yes, funny.

The recurrence of daughters attached

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to dying mothers in "Friend of My Youth" and "Goodness and Mercy"—a subject also addressed superbly in the early novel-in-short-story-form *The Beggar Maid*—raises the interesting question of authorial range. Nearly every major character in this book, as in Munro's others, is a woman; most are adulterers; most are seen over a span of some years; most are perceptive and articulate about their own longings and failings; and every story except for "Friend of My Youth" is recounted in the third person. Such a clustering of similarities is often the sign of a limited writer, and, probably, an autobiographical writer (not necessarily, of course, the same thing).

Yet although Munro strikes me as exactly the sort of person I would care to know, I don't at all have the feeling that I do. Like the machinery of her sentences, she is in some important way admirably invisible. Munro writes of certain attributes—selfishness or carelessness, for example—with the authority of one who has "been there"; but she is remarkably selfless in her presentation of material that may, in this way or that, be autobiographical. And given other similarities among her stories—their rueful but not lugubrious tone, the acute sense her characters suffer of the ineffability of life's lessons—the mutations Munro achieves in characterization and plotting are even more impressive. Finally, though, it is the largeness of Munro's wisdom that confirms her range. When, at the end of the intricately designed mansion of a story "Hold Me Fast, Don't Let Me Pass," Munro's woman protagonist wonders, "Meanwhile, what makes a man happy?" and can only speculate, "It must be something quite different," this is no abdication of authorial responsibility; it is a door boldly opened into another room.

One of the things we discover in that mysterious annex that Munro opens up, in story after story, is that all of us have been telling stories too. Many of Munro's characters (novelists, poets, actors, editors, teachers, journalists) are themselves employed as makers or interpreters of tales, but so is the housewife in "Miles City, Montana" who sees the "wooing of distant parts" of herself as her "real work." When she hopes that "the essential composition would be achieved," she is speaking of her life; but Munro is also speaking through her of the composition of this story, whose self-reflexiveness reminds us that we can never leave ourselves out of any truth, or truths, we apprehend. Munro is not merely rehashing the fiction writer's commonplace that all points of view are subjective and relative; she is giving us credit for attempting, nonetheless, now and then, an impossible overview of our lives.

A rage to consider everything simultaneously—not just the "distant parts" of the self but of other selves and, indeed, of a universe of objective fact—is the frustrated, mystical longing at the heart of nearly every story Munro has written. The "distant" is conceived not only in space but in time—hence those perspectives, clairvoyantly convincing, that Munro gives us of thirty years after, twenty years before. The short story has rarely been used (successfully) for so long-reaching a purpose. "Too many things," as the creative writing instructor in "Differently" chides his student; "Too many things going on at the same time; also too many people. Think, he told her. What is the important thing? What do you want us to pay attention to? Think."

Good advice, perhaps, to the writer of average talents, but it would not interest Almeda Joynt Roth, the nineteenth-century poet Munro invents in the most ambitious story in this volume, "Meneseteung." In a sort of grand, clearheaded delirium, and one of the most inspired moments in any of these extraordinary stories, Almeda demands of herself a God-like vision, a fusion of poetry's timeless themes and fiction's time-specific, place-specific raggedness:

> Isn't that the idea—one very great poem that will contain everything and, oh, that will make all the other poems, the poems she has written, inconsequential, mere trial and error, mere rags? Stars and flowers and birds and trees and angels in the snow and dead children at twilight—that is not the half of it. You have to get in the obscene racket on Pearl Street and the polished toe of Jarvis Poulter's boot and the plucked-chicken haunch with its blue-black flower. . .

Alice Munro knows that you must get all of that in—the bits and pieces of accident flying together into the deliberate whole of art—and once again, in *Friend of My Youth*, she has done it.

MARY JO SALTER is the author of two books of poems, *Henry Purcell in Japan* and *Unfinished Painting* (Knopf).

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

shouted) queries like: "Can't you get me a goddamn vertical?" "The photo agency wants *how much*?" "What do you mean I can't have another photo hole? Cut the text!"

Someone should give him a real job—like putting *The New York Times Magazine* to bed each week.

PETE TAFT
Hopewell, New Jersey

TRB *continued from page 4*

the anomalies. Life insurance companies, for example, start giving preferential rates to non-smokers, on the sensible grounds that smoking kills. Then it dawns on them that meanwhile they are major investors in tobacco stocks. That's the dilemma they're struggling with now.

The tobacco companies mock the anomalies. Logic is on their side when they ask what is particularly heinous about marketing a cigarette brand specifically to black people (or "virile women," another current target market) when there are dozens of brands marketed to all sorts of people. But focusing on such anomalies is a bad long-term strategy for them. It forces people to confront the question of why it's socially acceptable to sell cigarettes at all.

Many if not most of us are implicated in the tobacco industry in one way or another. If we don't own shares directly, we may own them unknowingly through a pension fund. This magazine takes cigarette ads, so part of my salary is paid for by tobacco. The U.S. government, incredibly, subsidizes tobacco farmers and helps to promote sales of American cigarettes in the Third World. Sports, arts, and minority promoters seek and accept tobacco industry grants: a flat swap of respectability for cash. As George Weissman, former chairman of Philip Morris, put it, with chilling complacency, when confronted on the question of tobacco companies funding cultural events: "The gurus on top of the Himalayas are the only clean people left in the world."

But this is about to change quickly, I think. First to fall off the train will be those for whom the anomalies are most painfully immediate. How, even today, do the tobacco firms find p.r. professionals willing to insist with a straight face that the link between smoking and cancer is "unproved"? How much longer will blue-chip lawyers be willing to argue (as they have in recent lawsuits) that tobacco advertising doesn't cause people to smoke? Many professional models already refuse to appear in cigarette ads. Will respectable advertising firms always be willing to design those youthful, life-filled ads?

Respectability is a fragile flower. Start pulling petals and it quickly wilts. And without respectability, the tobacco purveyors stand naked. People and institutions not deterred by their own consciences will be deterred by the stigma. Looking back, people will be as amazed by the existence of something like the Virginia Slims Tennis Tournament as we are today by advertising slogans of the 1940s and 1950s like "More doctors smoke Camels."

MICHAEL KINSLEY

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JERUSALEM DIARIST

Visionaries & fantasists

BEING IN JERUSALEM FOR PASSover this year meant being there for Easter and Ramadan, too. Our seder was hosted by Michal and Moshe Safdie in their house facing the Western Wall and fronting the restored ancient Jewish Quarter, which, a generation ago, was emptied of its Jews and rubbled by the Jordanians at the start of their 19-year occupation. Safdie is the architect whose daring but disciplined visual imagination has demonstrated in many distinctive places how traditional sensibilities and cutting-edge visions can cohere and deepen each other. He has shown this not least in Jerusalem, where any act, however well-intentioned, may be experienced as a slight by a population alert to slights above all. At the seder table were seated one Mexican Catholic family, one Arab intellectual, two American Protestants, and a cohort of Jews of varying origins, ages, and religious inclinations. The intercommunal tensions of the streets found no echo in the Safdies' house. But there was no avoiding the sensation that everyone felt his own separate connection to Jerusalem. As Mayor Teddy Kollek said some years ago, "In this small place, alas, many of mankind's deepest convictions were born."

WITHIN VIEW OF OUR SEDER WAS the site of the destroyed temples: Mount Moriah, where Abraham and Isaac were tested by God. The Mosque of Omar and the Dome of the Rock now take up the whole expanse; though Muhammad never traveled here, it is from here that the faithful believe he ascended to heaven on his white steed. To the left you can discern in the crude stones of Suleimanic times the remnants of a fortress of the Crusaders. They had come, as their successors in piety still come, because history is immanent here; close by winds the Via Dolorosa, the stations of the cross on Jesus' journey from Calvary. Destiny has determined that in these close but not altogether closed quarters neighbors will both jostle each other and go their own ways. We did not begin our seder until the Muslim authorities had fired the cannon informing believers that the day's fast had ended. One of the guests thought this a parable.

CUSTOM INSTRUCTS THAT WITH the blessing over the seder's first cup of wine everyone leans to the left. No one in our assembly was learned or inventive enough to explain why. I do remember suggesting long ago that leaning to the left was a symbol of freedom. (The explanation made some circumstantial sense, Passover being the festival of freedom.) I couldn't say that today with a straight face. The left has always had its brave advocates of freedom, of course, but its most powerful strain has enshrined not freedom but immiseration, captivity, brutality, tyranny. In Israel this Passover were tens of thousands of new Soviet Jewish refugees, witnesses to the catastrophe of "actually existing socialism." Their arrival in Zion was their liberation from a left whose moral claims they see as cruel presumptions. Still, they are an open-minded and tolerant influx. Hence the rush by many Israeli families to have new immigrants at their table this seder. There weren't enough to go around this time, but there will be next year and the year after, when hundreds of thousands will have trekked from Leningrad and Lvov, Baku and Stalingrad, to the Promised Land. By then the reunion of the dispersed will have been much advanced.

THERE WILL BE POLITICAL CONSEquences to the immigration. It is bad news for the Labor Party, whose ancient roots intermingle with those of the despised ideologies of Eastern Europe. It is bad news too for the ultrareligious, whose fervid dogmatism is alien to the yearnings of these Jews for a normal, undoctrinaire life. And it's terrible news for the Palestinians—not because, as George Bush imagines, these Soviet Jews will settle in the West Bank or Gaza, which they won't, but because they add morale and strength to the whole Zionist enterprise. This is a transformatory immigration. More than 40 percent of the adult immigrants are scientists, engineers, and academics, most of them in fields like aerospace, computers, and mathematics. More than that: the Arabs had persuaded themselves that they needn't accept the permanence of the Jews in the land because in the demographic race the Jews inevitably would lose. Israel would be as transient as the Crusader kingdom. This was always a fantasy—a fantasy that, even among the easily mesmerized Palestinians, can hardly survive the vast new migration.

THIS IS ONE REASON WHY THE Palestinians, even with the tilt to their cause of Senator Robert Dole and perhaps also of Secretary James Baker, are now in deep brooding. The intifada, as one dovish Israeli general put it, is now experienced in Israel as a low-grade headache. Sure, Jewish kids don't like policing the alleys of Nablus. But the intifada's violence is no longer so much aimed at them or even at the settlers; it is expressed in harrowing fratricides among the Palestinians themselves. The army never matched in gruesomeness the murders by the *shebab*. And it's been months since the army killed as many Palestinians as these inflamed young thugs of the revolution now kill—all in the name of Palestine and of a process the PLO claims still to control.

ROBERT DOLE WAS NOT THE ONLY recent pilgrim to Baghdad. Yasir Arafat also journeyed there to be received by Saddam Hussein. In a joint appearance at Al-Mostaneriya University (imagine the curriculum!) the president of Iraq began by saying, "I can see the day when you and I will march hand in hand in the victory parade through Palestine." To which the would-be president of would-be Palestine fantasized, "We will enter Jerusalem victorious and raise our flags over its walls. You will enter with me atop your white horse." Then, vaguely addressing the Israelis (not present), Arafat threatened, "We will fight you with stones, with rifles, and with missiles." The missiles doubtless would originate in Iraq. The axis between Arafat and Saddam Hussein connects what State Department Arabists insist on seeing as the alliance of moderate Arabs. The existence of this moderate alternative to fundamentalist Islam may be an indispensable hypothesis for stumped policymakers. But here fact imposes itself on theory. There *is* an alliance, though it is very far from moderate. Given what Iraq has furtively acquired in Western markets, it is a dangerous one. The United States may choose to ignore this; Israel cannot afford to do the same.

WE HEARD THE BERLIN PHILHARmonic, on its first tour in Israel. The Israel Philharmonic had performed in Germany many times, but a reciprocal visit had to await the passing of Herbert von Karajan, the Berlin maestro who had been a Nazi party member. The orchestra was conducted by the renowned Israeli musician Daniel Barenboim, who had led it in its commemoration in Potsdamer Platz of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In Jerusalem the Berlin Philharmonic played a Mozart, a Brahms, and Beethoven's Egmont Overture. Then, while the audience still applauded, the visitors from Berlin stood. Silence quickly filled the hall and the Philharmonic played "Hatikvah," the anthem of the Jewish nation. History is full of poignant ironies. But only a madman or a mystic might have dared foretell that the pride of German music would soon end a concert in Jerusalem, the capital of restored Zion, with the haunting C-minor strains of the hymn of hope. It was an exquisite moment of reconciliation.

MARTIN PERETZ

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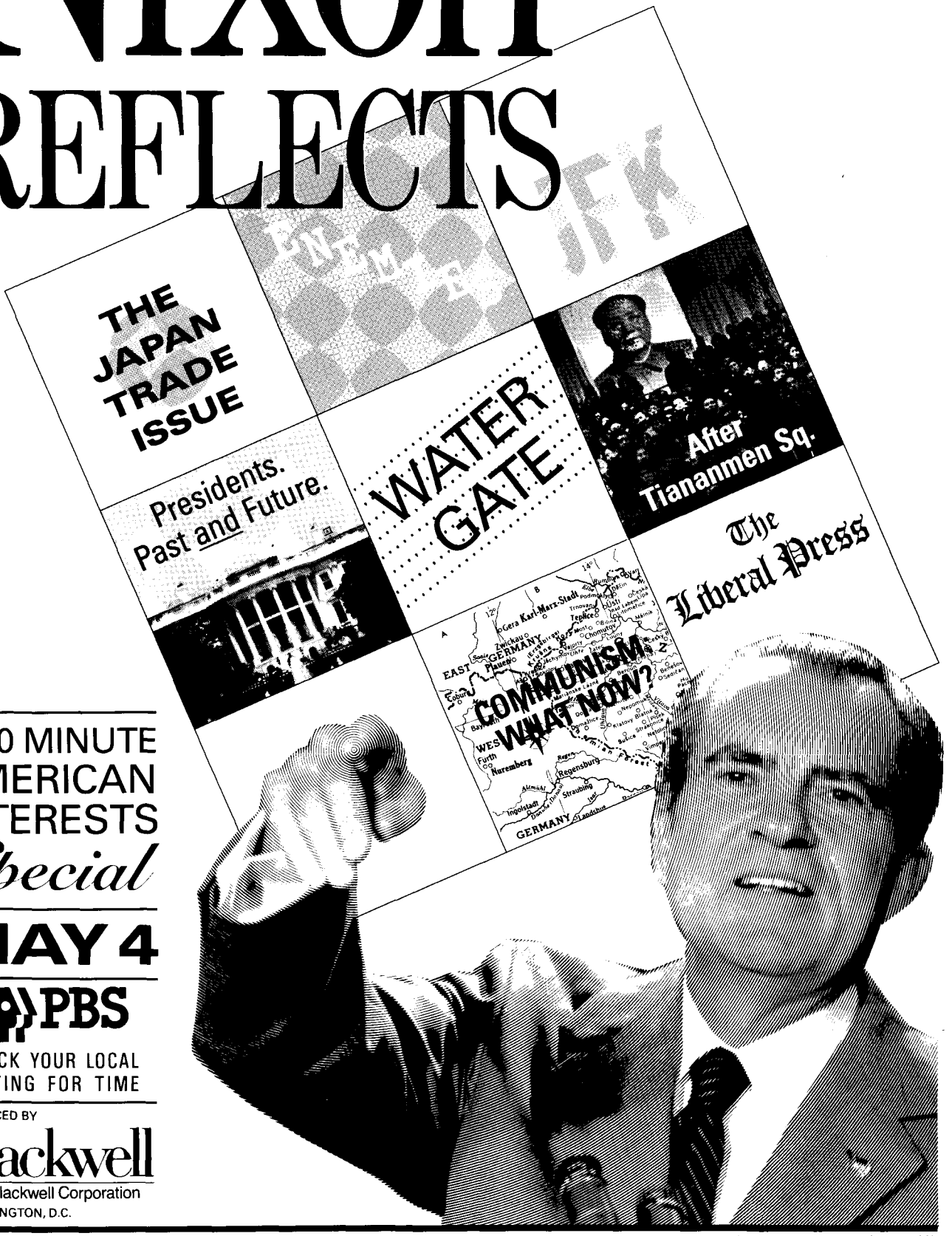
RICHARD Nixon REFLECTS



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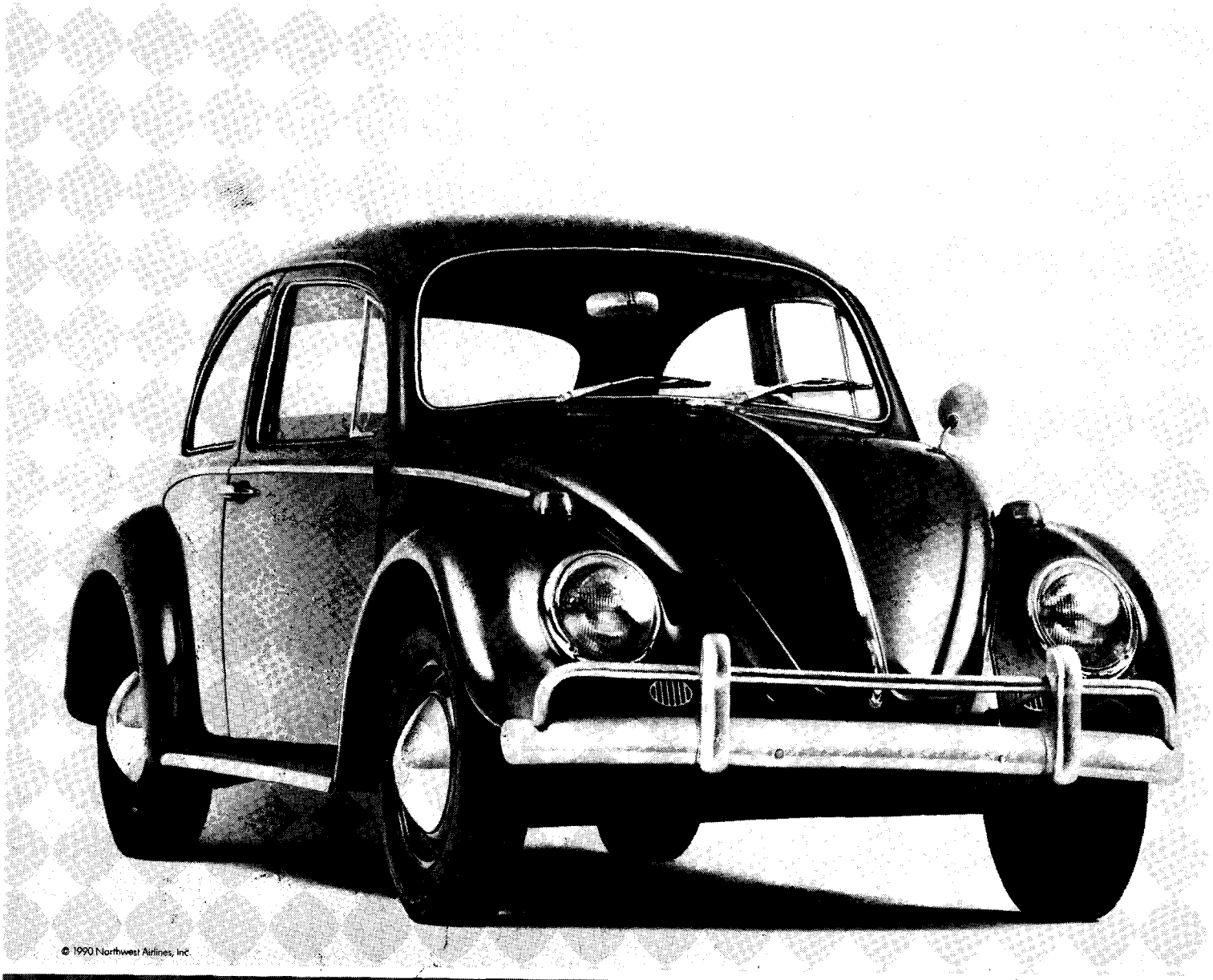

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